THE CONTINENTAL REFORMATION

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THE CONTINENTAL REFORMATION

IN GERMANY, FRANCE AND SWITZERLAND

FROM THE BIRTH OF LUTHER TO THE DEATH OF CALVIN

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PREFACE

THIS little volume reproduces the substance, and for the most part the exact words, of four lectures which were delivered to clergy at Oxford in July, 1911, and which have appeared, in a somewhat abbreviated form, as a series of papers in *The Churchman*, October, 1911–May, 1912. What was omitted there has been restored here, and considerable additions have been made, in some places to the text, and in many places to the notes. For lack of time, very few of the notes were read when the lectures were delivered. At the conclusion of the course, the lecturer was asked by some who had heard him whether what he had said would be published, and he was unable at the time to make any certain reply. The papers in *The Churchman* were a partial response to that suggestion, and the present volume is a more complete response. For convenience, the first three lectures have each of them been divided into two sections, and the fourth lecture has been divided into three.

The purpose of the book is identical with the purpose of the lectures, viz. to increase interest in an

important subject, and to induce those who know something about it to increase their knowledge by further study. During the last fifty years many minds in many Christian communions have been scandalized by our unhappy divisions and antagonisms, and many hearts have been yearning for the reunion of Christendom, or if reunion be impossible, for the peace of the Church. These feelings are yearly increasing in intensity and volume, and, if they are to bear fruit, those who are conscious of them must endeavour to find out what were the causes which produced and deepened the divisions. One chief cause has been, and still is, the prejudice which is born of ignorance—ignorance of the faults of our own side, and ignorance of the just claims which can be made by those who differ from us. Study of the great crisis which we call the Reformation will do something towards removing this prejudice. It is the truth, and the truth only, that can set us free, and make us ready for the fulfilment of the Saviour's prayer, "that they may be one."

It will be noticed that the large majority of the references in this book are to modern works. The reason for this is twofold. To the students for whom the book is intended, references to works which can be easily procured are more likely to be useful than references to original authorities which are less accessible. Secondly, references to original authorities have to a very large extent been ren-

dered unnecessary by the admirable collection of *Documents illustrative of the Continental Reformation*, edited by Dr. Kidd, Oxford, 1911. Not many public libraries, and very few private ones, contain all the numerous works from which Dr. Kidd has selected just those passages which the serious student of this eventful period requires for his purpose; and the arrangement of the selected passages is as good as the selection itself. Some knowledge of Latin and French is necessary for the full use of this excellent volume; but even those who know neither language will find it helpful.

The literature of the subject is enormous and bewildering, as may easily be seen by the bibliography (which does not claim to be exhaustive) at the end of Vols. I. and II. of *The Cambridge Modern History*. With few exceptions, the following list is confined to English works, and works which have been translated into English; but even among such it is only a selection.

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THE CONTINENTAL REFORMATION

I

HOW TO ESTIMATE THE REFORMATION

A MODERN historian, who has instructed all of us, and whom many of us have had the happiness of knowing, has justly said that our aim in studying history ought to be "the formation of a right judgment on the great issues of human affairs."[1] Our recent and present political experiences must have shown to those who can take a calm survey of the situation, that it is possible to adopt and maintain very strong opinions, without the comprehensive knowledge on which strong opinions ought to be based. And if the study of history cannot always give the necessary knowledge, it can at least give us that sobriety of judgment which will show us the dangers of over-statement and over-haste, and keep us from

[1] Creighton, *Inaugural Lecture at Cambridge.*

lending a hand in winning apparent successes which prove far more ruinous than failures. History teaches us the extraordinary complexity of the forces which influence human action, and the great, though limited, power which men's wills and characters have in directing the course of affairs. It may be true that history never repeats itself, and therefore never tells us exactly what the present moment requires; but at least it can teach us the temper and spirit in which present problems must be approached.

Ecclesiastical history is no exception. There also there are no exact repetitions. The appeal to the first three centuries, or the first six centuries, is always interesting, and nearly always instructive; but it cannot always teach us what we ought to think or to do at the present time. Present conditions are so different, that modifications are almost certain to be necessary. We can learn method, and we can learn temper; and still more surely we can learn what tempers and methods have proved disastrous. But, perhaps, the chief gain is to see the characters of the men who have produced the most valuable and permanent results. It is here that imitation is always safe. What such men actually said and did is of far less value than the spirit in which they worked. It can hardly be summed up better than in the motto which Döllinger chose for his guidance: *Nihil temere, nihil*

timide, sed omnia consilio et virtute—No rashness, no cowardice, but in everything forethought and courage. How very different the history of the Reformation would have been, had those who took leading parts in it acted on these principles! It is principles rather than hero-worship that we ought to get from this, as from other momentous periods.

It is inevitable that we should commonly regard the Reformation as a religious movement: but it was certainly not exclusively religious, and it is perhaps true to say that it was not primarily or mainly religious. A great crisis in European thought and action would have come in the sixteenth century, not only if there had been no Luther, or Zwingli, or Calvin, but even if there had been no great religious problems which had been clamouring for solution for at least two centuries.[1] The break with the past was quite as much political as religious, and the political break was accentuated by social and economical changes of the greatest magnitude.[2] There were also vast intellectual changes which told in both directions. These perhaps affected the religious side of the movement more than the political side, but they would not have made the movement a religious one, if there

[1] J. Mackinnon, *A History of Modern Liberty*, II. pp. 44. 49 f.

[2] C. B. Lumsden, *The Dawn of Modern England*, p. 5; Ranke, *History of the Popes*, I, ch. ii.

had been no religious questions to be solved. It was a period of deep and dangerous discontent, and a great upheaval of some kind was inevitable. Men felt that they were living in a new age which called for a fundamental change in the conditions of life. This feeling may have been confined to the more thoughtful minority : but every one could feel that evils which had lasted for centuries, and which had been intensified, or more keenly felt, during the last fifty years, had now become intolerable, and must —either by rulers or people—be abolished. There were not a few who said that there would be destruction, if reformation was denied much longer ; and there were some who thought that destruction would be the better of the two. We must look to the eve of the French Revolution to find an era in which bitter criticism of almost all existing institutions was so rife as at the eve of the Reformation ; and even in that case the criticism was not nearly so widespread as at the beginning of the sixteenth century ; it was national rather than European, or at least was less intense elsewhere than in France.[1] But, when the fifteenth century closed, the whole of Western and Central Europe was seething with discontent, and those who might have remedied it were paralysed, in most cases by selfishness, because the abuses were profitable to them, in other

[1] Frederic Harrison, *The Meaning of History*, p. 195.

cases by dismay. Those who longed to bring about a reform did not know where to begin: the removal of hopelessly corrupt portions might bring the whole edifice down.

The Reformation was neither the beginning nor the end of a great movement, but the culminating point—reached somewhat swiftly—of a process which had long been going on, and which has continued to our own time. Or, perhaps it may be nearer the truth to say that it was a great explosion, the materials for which had long been accumulating, and the effects of which are still felt. For three hundred years or more there had been complaints, especially in Germany, of the tyranny of the Popes and the worldliness of the clergy; and it was in Germany, one of the quietest and least pushing countries in Europe, that the most effectual protest against the tyranny of the Popes was at last made. In any case, the Reformation must not be regarded as an isolated phenomenon. It was a crisis in the general progress of society, in its troubled passage from the Middle Ages to modern civilization. It was the crowning episode, in which the struggle for freedom of thought developed into a struggle for freedom of action. And in this great transformation a variety of elements were intertwined, acting and reacting on one another. There were not only the political, social and religious developments, which came to a head almost simultaneously.

There were advances in art and philosophy, in navigation and weapons of war, in the opening out of new continents, in discoveries and inventions, especially in the discovery of buried treasures of literature and in the invention of printing. There was a general unfettering and enrichment of the human mind.[1]

The Reformation is like the French Revolution in another particular. Hardly any other period of history has been more differently estimated.[2] Both of them have been extravagantly praised and extravagantly abused. They have been regarded as the source, directly or indirectly, of almost everything great or beneficial that has since taken place. They have also been regarded as among the greatest of European calamities, equally distinguished by the portentous blunders and the portentous crimes which were their causes and their effects. Even so lately as May, 1910, the Borromeo Encyclical, which almost immediately produced such a sensation in Germany, declared that "the leaders of the Reformation were proud and rebellious men, enemies of the Cross of Christ, who mind earthly things, whose god is their belly." There is not

[1] G. P. Fisher, *The Reformation*, p. 10; A. Plummer, *English Church History*, 1509–75, pp. 7 f.

[2] W. Hobhouse, *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 218, 219, and the literature there quoted; A. Robertson, *Bampton Lectures*, p. 332.

much sobriety of judgment in criticisms of this kind. Whatever else the leaders may have been, they were neither demigods nor demons.

These extravagant estimates of the Reformation, made by subsequent generations, are easily recognized as fallacious by those who will make a serious effort to ascertain and fairly weigh the facts. But, in the generations before the Reformation, there runs a fallacy which is less commonly recognized. Almost from the Apostolic Age, Christians have marked a contrast between the Church and the world. When the world was wholly pagan, such a contrast was inevitable. The Head of the Church was Christ, and the prince of this world was the devil. It was equally inevitable that this contrast should lead on to the contrast between "sacred" and "secular." As soon as that distinction was made, there was material for a mischievous fallacy. Secular is opposed to sacred. What is sacred must always be good: therefore what is secular is, of course, evil; it is profane and anti-Christian. Among the great services which the better Humanists rendered to European society was that of demonstrating that a great deal of what was purely secular was by no means evil.[1]

It is with the Reformation as a religious movement that we have to do: its other aspects will

[1] R. L. Poole, *History of Mediaeval Thought*, p. 177.

have, for the most part, to be ignored. And it is with regard to its religious aspect that the widest differences exist in estimating its merits. Everything, of course, depends upon the point of view. Is it a truism or a fallacy to say that a religious movement must be judged from a religious point of view? One remembers Dr. Johnson's trenchant comment on the dictum, "Who rules o'er freemen must himself be free," and one fears to meet with similar criticism. Nevertheless, there may be some reason in the presumption that the non-religious point of view is less likely to bring us to a sound conclusion.[1] Of course if there is no God to guide the wills and affections of men, or if the Church is not a Divine institution for affording such guidance, then the non-religious point of view is the right one. We shall then regard the Reformation as a long stride in the march of humanity towards complete emancipation from all restraints, excepting those which each individual imposes upon himself under the guidance of his own reason. Little as they intended it, the Reformers, from this point of view, were leading society onwards towards that Utopia in which each man is to frame his own creed and his own decalogue, without let or hindrance.

[1] What follows owes much to *Lectures and Papers on the History of the Reformation*, by Aubrey L. Moore.

Let us grant that such a view has fragments of truth in it; and also that at any rate it is true to say that the motives which led to the Lutheran revolt were to a large extent secular rather than spiritual. Nevertheless, this view is utterly misleading. Can any one doubt that religion supplied an immense deal of the driving-power of the movement? Can any one doubt that many of its most important results were religious results? If you could have convinced any one of the leaders that he was working towards the abolition of all religious restraints, he would at once have become an opponent. The restraints which he desired to abolish, and the freedom which he desired to establish, were of a different kind. He aimed at securing freedom for each individual soul to have communion with God in whatever way his personal experience taught him to be best for him. And he believed that in this great struggle God was working surely, if slowly, on his side. Will any Theist, who studies the course of events, condemn such belief as superstition? We do not obtain a more scientific view of history by leaving God out of the account.

If we adopt a religious point of view, the chief question to be decided is, whether the Reformation was, on the whole, a benefit or a calamity for Christendom. We say "on the whole," because no sane critic would say that it has been a benefit without losses, or a calamity without advantages.

The most fanatical Puritan must admit that some things that were harmless, and some even that were of real value, were sacrificed in the vehement desire to purify the Church. And the most bigoted Ultramontane must allow that there was need for purification, and that, if much that was precious was destroyed, some intolerable abuses were abated. No well-read Romanist can maintain that the Reformation was nothing better than the sudden outbreak of a number of false opinions and perilous practices, most of which had appeared before, and had, one after another, been condemned by the Church, and which now appeared simultaneously, in order that, in God's providence, all these poisonous elements might be simultaneously cast out.[1]

It is more true to say that, as a religious movement, the Reformation was an effort to get back to the Christianity of the primitive Church, as depicted in the New Testament and in the writings of the early Fathers. This meant getting rid of a number of additions to faith and discipline which had been made, without Divine authority, in the course of ages, and which had not only obscured, but had utterly disfigured, the teaching of Christ

[1] Such was the view which the nuncio Aleander expressed in the condemnation of Luther which he drew up and got Charles V to sign after Luther's condemnation by the Diet of Worms in 1521; Luther "had brought together all previous heresies in one stinking mass."

and His Apostles and their immediate followers. The disfigurement had been so complete that even those who were ignorant of what Christ and His Apostles had taught—and this ignorance prevailed widely among both laity and clergy—could not but feel that there was something fatally defective and misleading in the beliefs and practices which were prescribed by authority or sanctioned by general custom. A religion which gave no permanent relief to the troubled conscience, and which often condoned what was plainly immoral, could not be of God. And as soon as the revival of letters caused the contents of the New Testament and the teaching of the Fathers to be known, it was seen that what passed for Christianity at the close of the fifteenth century was scarcely recognizable as such, when placed side by side with what we know of Christianity at the close of the Apostolic Age.

That the effort to get back to primitive Christianity was not always well-informed, and that in the end it became impatient, improvident, and violent, may be freely conceded. But we must not blame the reforming party for not using knowledge which they had never possessed and which was still out of their reach. And they would have been more than mortal, and perhaps would have been less effective, if they had not in the end resorted to violent measures. The first Reformers aimed

simply at getting rid of abuses, which could not be denied and were not even concealed, and which were generally admitted to be appalling: they had no wish to interfere with existing authority, whether of Pope, Council, or Bishops. It was only when experience proved that neither Pope, nor Councils, nor Bishops would remedy these intolerable evils, that they broke away from ecclesiastical authority, as then constituted, and took in hand the work of reform themselves.

That this view of the Reformation, when regarded as a religious crisis, is nearer to the truth than the Roman view, is shown by several facts.

1. Long before the close of the fifteenth century the desire for a reform of the Church was widespread. Men might differ as to whether the mediaeval Church was simply to be freed from grievous maladies, while its sacerdotal ministry and elaborate hierarchy were retained, or whether the only sure reform was to sweep away the mediaeval system altogether; but in almost all classes—monks and friars, clergy and laity—there were many who felt that the existing evils could not continue much longer, and that a great purifying process, possibly gradual, but probably tempestuous, must soon begin. Charles V and Erasmus were for the gentler method, Zwingli and Calvin for the more radical. Luther began with the former view, but moved onwards—perhaps, on the whole, unwillingly—to the

other. Yet all were agreed about this: a great reform was necessary, and could not long be delayed. Pope after Pope professed to be about to make reforms, and Adrian VI tried to begin some. In 1522 he told his Legate at Augsburg to promise reform, but to point out that it would be a slow business; *inveteratus enim morbus, nec simplex, sed varius et multiplex.* There are *multa abominanda* and the *Curia* is perhaps the source *unde omne hoc malum processit.*

2. The large amount of agreement which was reached at one or two of the conferences between the opposing parties, and especially at Ratisbon in 1541, is evidence that the Reformers were able to urge a great deal that was fully admitted by the other side.[1]

3. When at last a Council did meet at Trent, although the conditions which were imposed did not allow the Lutherans to be present, yet a number of their reforms were discussed, and a few of them were partly carried.

In the face of such facts as these it is foolish to maintain that the Reformers were simply a gang of heretical mischief-makers. They were revolutionists, because nothing less drastic than a revo-

[1] B. J. Kidd, *Documents illustrative of the Continental Reformation*, pp. 341 f.—an invaluable help to the student of this subject.

lution could cure the deep-seated evils. Yet their aim was not (as the Romanist declares) the destruction of religious truth, but its revival. And the movement was also—although the Reformers did not consciously aim at this—a revolution leading to the right of the individual to have his own ideas about religious truth.

It was not at once seen that this necessary revolution might be effected in two ways, and that a choice might have to be made between the two.[1] It was at least conceivable, however improbable, that the Pope and the hierarchy throughout the whole of the Western Church would make a combined effort and free Christendom from its deadly corruptions. And it was conceivable, and not improbable, that the civil and ecclesiastical rulers of each nation might work in concert and remove the scandals which existed within their own jurisdiction.

The more general plan might have seemed to be not quite impossible when Pius III became Pope in 1503; but his hopeful pontificate lasted only twenty-six days. The hope might possibly have revived when Adrian VI succeeded Leo X in 1522; but he only lived long enough to learn the insuperable difficulty of the task. In neither case did a

[1] C. Hardwick, *Hist. of the Christian Church during the Reformation*, pp. 1–7.

general reform become an actual possibility. Only one reason for this need be mentioned. It was impossible to abolish the corruptions which both sides deplored, without causing financial ruin to vast numbers of officials, high and low, ecclesiastical and civil. Not only would it have been impossible to induce these officials to co-operate in the work of reform—and without their consent reform was condemned to failure; but good men on the Roman side, who were most anxious to abolish abuses, shrank from inflicting so much suffering as their abolition would involve. When men had sunk their whole fortune in buying a lucrative post which had been put up for auction, would it not be monstrous to abolish all such posts? And there was no money with which to make compensation. When Leo X died, the Papacy was not only in debt, but bankrupt.[1] A reforming Pope had no chance of success. Every door was barred, and every wheel was jammed.

Nevertheless, when Adrian VI was elected, hopes of reform were kindled, at any rate outside Italy. In Holland inscriptions were put up; "Utrecht

[1] The Roman populace could not forgive the Pope for leaving such debts, thus crippling the expenditure of his successor. They said of him, as had been said before of Boniface VIII, "Thou has crept in like a fox, like a lion hast thou ruled us, and like a dog hast thou died." Leo had died without the sacraments.

planted; Louvain watered; the Emperor gave the increase." To which, however, some one added, "And God had nothing to do with it." In Rome it was quite impossible that any reforming Pope should be popular. The worldly interests and domestic sympathies of multitudes of Romans were bound up with the maintenance of the mediaeval traditions respecting the Papacy and the Curia [1]; and the Roman populace was both amused and enriched by the profligate expenditure of the hierarchy. Adrian VI tried to moderate this, and himself set a severe example of simple living. When he died, the Romans put up *their* inscription. They professed to think that the physician who attended the Pope in his last illness had helped to make the illness fatal. Over the physician's door they hung a wreath, with an inscription "to the Liberator of his country"—*Liberatori Patriae Senatus Populusque Romanus.*

In the end, it was the national system of reformation that was carried out, partially in Germany and Switzerland, and much more completely in Holland, England, and Scotland. In those countries in which the national and political stimulus was absent or was weak, the religious movement failed. In Italy and Spain, where the struggle was

[1] J. A. Symonds, *The Renaissance in Italy*, II, pp. 404, 405.

chiefly a matter of religion and culture, the struggle was ineffectual. In France, where political support was fitful and uncertain, the religious movement was defeated.

II

THE CONTINENTAL CONTRASTED WITH THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

WE have restricted ourselves to the religious factors in the Reformation, and we have decided to adopt the religious rather than the non-religious view in studying it. We must now make a further limitation. We must endeavour to confine ourselves to the Continental Reformation and leave our own country out of the account. This suggests that some of the features in which the reforming movement on the Continent differed from the reforming movement in England should be pointed out.[1]

1. The two were alike in being the result of causes which had long been working, and which had greatly increased in force and volume during the preceding century; and to a considerable extent the causes were the same. But there were important

[1] A. L. Moore, *Lectures on the Reformation*, pp. 319 f.

differences, and only in certain particulars is the English Reformation parallel to the Continental one. It is specially interesting to notice the difference between the positions from which the two movements started. The English started with the desire to secure the ancient rights of the English Church, and to defend the English nation against the ceaseless encroachments of the Church of Rome. Centuries of experience had taught them that the only way in which this could effectually be accomplished was to cut themselves free from the jurisdiction of Rome. This at the outset, was the main object, if not the only object.[1] No other changes, such as reforms in doctrine, or ritual, or discipline, were desired by any considerable number of persons; and nearly every official, whether in Church or State, was opposed to such changes. When at last a desire for these reforms became general, it was largely in consequence of what had already taken place on the Continent; and then the English Church could do as its rulers thought best in the matter. It had freed itself from the hampering control of Rome and had regained its constitutional liberty; therefore any ecclesiastical changes which were regarded as necessary could be executed at once. The organization of the English Church which had come down to it from Theodore of Tarsus

[1] A. Plummer, *Eng. Ch. Hist.*, 1509–75, pp. 50–64.

(A.D. 668–690) remained intact; it was no longer impeded by Roman interference; and it could reform itself in any direction that seemed to be desirable.

This happy condition of things did not prevail on the Continent. There the process of reformation was reversed. The reforms in doctrine, ritual, and discipline came first; and these led on to a complete rejection of the authority of Rome. What was the consequence? Not only were reforms hampered by the interference of Rome, but Luther had no organization ready to his hand with which to effect them. The only ecclesiastical organization which existed was his deadly enemy. He had to build up an entirely new system; and he had to do this long before the reforms in discipline and doctrine were complete. The result was dissension almost from the first. Luther had his view, and Zwingli his, and Calvin yet another, and there was no Convocation or Council to decide between them. The only substitute for a central authority, such as both Rome and England possessed, was the appeal to Scripture. And that was an appeal which settled very little. The text was not always certain; translations varied considerably, especially in the renderings of crucial passages; and interpretations varied most of all. Every one claimed to have Scripture on his side.

2. Not only did the Continent begin with the

reform of doctrine and practice, while England began with the rejection of Roman jurisdiction; both of them intended to end where they began. Neither had at first any intention of taking the step which was being taken by the other. When Luther agitated for reform in the matter of indulgences (A.D. 1517–8), he had no thought of breaking with Rome: he wrote most submissively to his own diocesan and to the Pope.[1] When Henry VIII broke with Rome (A.D. 1529–32), he had no idea of introducing changes of doctrine: on the contrary, he ruthlessly persecuted those who advocated change (The Six Articles, 1539). Thus, the Continental Reformers would have kept just what England rejected, while England would have retained just what the Continent determined to reject.

3. Another point in which the English Reformation differed from the Continental was that in England the *paganism* of the Renaissance had little power. In general culture, and especially in literature, England felt the influence of the New Learning. But, while this aided the movement for reform by exposing the ignorant superstition and folly of monks and clergy, it did not corrupt society with a revival of pagan immorality. In England it was the increased knowledge of the Scriptures that was specially valued; in Italy and

[1] Kidd, *Documents illustrative of the Continental Reformation*, pp. 27, 37.

France it was chiefly the increased knowledge of the classics. In Italy, and especially in Rome, we find learning, a passion for the arts, and devotion to the refinements of culture, combined with ferocity, cruelty, and the coarsest forms of self-indulgence. On the one side a seeming zeal for everything that is intellectual and beautiful; on the other, a dissoluteness worthy of the court of Elagabalus.[1] Erasmus said that the enthusiasm for classical literature was in some of the Humanists "a mere pretext for the revival of paganism, which is dearer to them than the glory of Christ."

Germany was closer to England in this respect. There, as in Italy, there was plenty of magnificence, luxury, and sensuality. But in Germany there was not much paganism among the Humanists. Some of them, like Melanchthon, used their learning for the interpretation of Scripture. Others, like Ulrich von Hutten, were ready with verses and satires, and sometimes with swords, to free their

[1] Plummer, *Eng. Ch. Hist.*, pp. 28, 29; Pennington, *Life of Erasmus*, p. 322. Erasmus says that some Humanists objected to the name of Christ in polite literature, "as if nothing were elegant which had not a heathen origin. To them *Jupiter Optimus Maximus* has a pleasanter sound than *Jesus Christus Redemptor Mundi*. They account it more disgraceful not to be a Ciceronian than not to be a Christian. This detestable lauding of Cicero is a mere pretext for the revival of Paganism, which is dearer to them than the glory of Christ."

country from Roman exactions and encroachments. Very few were enthusiastic for a revival of heathen thought and morals. The truth perhaps is, that the Renaissance, in its revolt from the obscurantist corporations of the Middle Ages, laid emphasis on the natural dignity of every individual. In the mediaeval system, the individual was lost in some ecclesiastical order, or secular guild, to which he belonged. The New Learning taught him his own personal value.[1] In some cases, the sense of individuality led to libertinism; each might do what seemed good in his own eyes. In other cases, it led to deeper moral earnestness; if the individual is so valuable, "self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control" are the virtues which he is bound to cultivate. The former was the effect which it too often had on the Continent; the latter was more often the effect in England. Or we may say that the New Learning taught each individual how much power he had over all his surroundings. This new sense of power made those who felt it eager to use it to the full. Italians exercised it in one way, Englishmen in another.

4. Yet a fourth point of difference between our Reformation and the Continental one may be mentioned, and it is one of considerable magnitude. In England, the results which were attained were

[1] E. Belfort Bax, *The Peasant War in Germany*, p. 18; Lumsden, *The Dawn of Modern England*, pp. 10, 18.

much more the work of the nation than of any one Reformer. Scotland in this respect was like the Continent. It had its Knox, whose self-confident faith, strong will, and strong speech carried the Scottish people along with him, as Luther carried the Germans, and made him for a time a Scottish political leader as well a religious reformer. But in England there was no commanding genius who was the soul of the movement and put the impress of his character upon it. There is little comparison in this respect between Henry VIII and Luther, and still less between Cranmer and Zwingli, or Parker and Calvin. Such comparisons bring out contrasts rather than similarities.

5. One more difference between the two movements is of considerable interest. Both in the processes which led up to the Reformation and in the actual struggle, much less use was made in England than on the Continent of ridicule and satire as engines of assault upon Rome. Here we had no Pasquino or Marforio, and not very much that will bear comparison with Sebastian Brandt's "Ship of Fools" (*Narrenschiff*) or Erasmus's "Praise of Folly" (*Encomium Moriae*); still less anything that can rival the immortal *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum* by Crotus Rubianus and others, or the equally immortal "Pantagruel" and "Gargantua" of Rabelais, or even the *Vadiscus* and other pungent and witty products of that extraordinary

compound of patriotism, passion, and recklessness, Ulrich von Hutten. It is quite true that some of these satires—notably the "Ship of Fools"—were soon translated into English and had influence in England; while the "Praise of Folly" was made intelligible to those who knew no Latin by the speaking illustrations of Holbein. But they were not the work of Englishmen, and perhaps were never very widely read here; whereas they were devoured on the Continent. Moreover, there was on the Continent a vast amount of similar literature, written in the broadest humour, for the lower orders. Extravagant satires like *Karsthans* and *Neukarsthans* and the *Wittenbergische Nachtigall* of Hans Sachs, were immensely popular.[1] There were broadsheets, often illustrated with rough cuts, which were eagerly read by artizans in the towns and peasants in the villages; and those who were unable to read could appreciate the illustrations and get some one else to read to them. In England such things were far less common. In Scotland there were plenty of satirical verses, which have been collected in two large octavo volumes;[2] but

[1] *Camb. Mod. Hist.*, II, p. 159. An Englishman travelling in Germany in 1523 was amazed at the number of pictures satirizing the friars, and sent some specimens to Henry VIII.

[2] Cranstoun, *Satirical Poems of the Time of the Reformation*, 1891–3. Dr. Kidd gives a better specimen in his *Documents*, p. 695. There was not a great deal of choice

perhaps one must be Scottish, or at any rate have more knowledge about details than most of us possess, in order to appreciate the witticisms. The rather tedious and monotonous lines of *Colyn Cloute*, by that eccentric literary phenomenon, John Skelton, who had been tutor to Henry VIII, and was poet laureate early in his reign, give a fair idea of the kind of satire that was produced in England in attacking the ignorance of the clergy. Skelton was for twenty-five years Rector of Diss in Norfolk, and we may assume that he knew a good many specimens of clergy such as he describes in his doggerel verses. He was the popularizer of a form of jingling rhymes which has since been known as Skeltonian verse, and he claims for it a certain amount of "pith."

> "Though my ryme be ragged,
> Tattered and jagged,
> If ye take well therewith
> It hath in it some pyth."

He thus describes the average clergy of his day.

> "Some are *insufficientes*,
> Some *parum sapientes*,
> Some *nihil intelligentes*,
> Some *nullum sensum habentes*.
> * * *

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as regards amusing literature in those days; and one suspects that even the illustrated broadsides, over which the working classes of that day roared with laughter, would bear comparison with *Comic Cuts* and *Ally Sloper*.

Their Mattins madly said,
Nothing devoutly prayed;
Their learning is so small,
Their *Primes* and *Hours* fall,
And leap out of their lips,
Like sawdust or dry chips.
I speak not now of all,
But the most in generall." [1]

Perhaps in his own time, when satire was less common in English, these rhymes were welcome; but they soon become wearisome to the modern reader. He was certainly a scholar, and Erasmus styles him *unum literarum Britanniarum lumen et decus*. He had the temerity to attack Wolsey at a time when Wolsey had the control of most things in England, in *Why come ye not to Courte?*—written in the same metre as *Colyn Cloute*. Henry VIII had sometimes employed him to make fun of people, and this may have emboldened him to attack the great Cardinal. Wolsey had put him in prison once, and to escape another imprisonment he took sanctuary in Westminster Abbey, where he died. He was sometimes satirized himself, for he fell foul of Alexander Barclay, who paid him in his own coin.

Barclay's English version of Brandt's "Ship

[1] "There is no more scathing indictment of the sins of the clergy before the reformation . . . but he takes care to explain that he writes in defence of, not against, the Church" (*Enc. Brit.*, 11th ed., XXV, p. 185).

of Fools" appeared in 1509, within fifteen years of the appearance of the original. It may be studied in a sumptuous edition in two volumes (1874), with the original illustrations, which add greatly to its interest.[1] It was the rage in the sixteenth century. Published in 1494, it was translated into Latin in 1497, and imitated in Latin in 1507. It was done into Dutch and Low German, twice into English, and three times into French. Selections from it were delivered from the pulpit by some of the best preachers of the day. Max Müller thus explains Brandt's immense popularity; "He writes in short chapters, and mixes his fools in such a manner that we always meet with a variety of new faces. There was room at that time for a work like the 'Ship of Fools.' It was the first printed book that treated of contemporaneous events and living persons. People are fond of the history of their own times. If the good qualities of their age are brought out, they think of themselves and their friends; if the dark features, they think of their neighbours and their enemies. The 'Ship of

[1] Edited by T. H. Jamieson. See also Zarncke's edition (Leipzig, 1854) of the original *Narrenschiff*. Barclay was a priest in the College of Ottery St. Mary, South Devon, and it was there that he completed the translation which has made him famous. He died Vicar of Great Baddow, Essex, 1552, having accepted the Reformation. Shortly before his death he became Rector of All Hallows, Lombard Street, which he seems to have held with Great Baddow.

Fools' is just such a satire as ordinary people would read, and read with pleasure. They would feel a slight twinge now and then, but they would put down the book at the end, and thank God that they were not as other men." [1]

Brandt divides society into 113 classes of fools, puts them into a ship, and sends them off to Narragonia, which we may regard as the Fools' Botany Bay. Many teachers, from the thirteenth century onwards, have been somewhat inaccurately called "fore-runners of the Reformation." Brandt is really such. It is not as evidence of the scandals and corruptions which cried aloud for remedy that his poem is so valuable, but as the work of one who actually began the work of reform. He does not expose the abominations committed by the greatest offenders among the clergy and laity, but the vices and follies of ordinary men and women. Like Luther, he used the vulgar tongue, and his verses became familiar to persons whom Luther's pamphlets did not reach. By his frank criticisms he helped the cause of reform, without any rebellion against the Church, or any special leaning towards

[1] *Chips from a German Workshop*, III. In his work on *The German Classics*, pp. 370–382, Max Müller gives extracts from the *Narrenschiff*, and also from Johann Geiler's writings. There are allusions to it in the *Epp. Obscurorum Virorum*. Thus (ii. 9), *Nos volumus navigare Ab hinc in Narragoniam, propter tuam stultitiam.*

the doctrines which were afterwards formulated by Luther. He was a Humanist, who frequently quotes Ovid, Catullus, Persius, and Seneca, and sometimes Cicero and Virgil, and thus was as much admired by Reuchlin and Erasmus as by the people. He is sarcastic rather than amusing, for his object is, not to raise a laugh, but to raise his fellows to higher aims; if not to a religious mind, at least to common sense. His shipload of fools is one of the best products of the surviving moral earnestness which prepared men's minds for radical reform. Barclay's rendering of it had more effect upon English literature than upon the English Reformation.

Some of the ephemeral sheets that were struck off for the enlightenment and amusement of the lower orders were very clever. Rather a favourite form was that of imaginary conversations—dialogues between peasants who freely criticize their superiors, between clergy and their parishioners, and so forth. In scores of these dialogues the peasant appears and "confounds with his common sense the learning of doctors of law and theology; he knows as much of the Scriptures as three parsons, and more; and he demolishes the arguments of Luther's antagonist, Murner."[1] But few skits

[1] *Camb. Mod. Hist.*, II, p. 175. Murner was also an antagonist of Eberlin, whose writings he parodied. Eberlin was one of the sanest and most original of Luther's supporters.

could be more telling than this story, which Johann Eberlin of Günzburg, himself a popular Swabian preacher (*c.* 1450–1530), relates. In 1521 he left the Franciscans and became an enthusiastic Lutheran teacher. He tells of a priest who confided to a friend that he really must begin to know something about the Bible. He has never heard any of it, excepting what occurs in the services; and his parishioners are beginning to read it, or at any rate to know something about it. And they ask such puzzling questions about persons and things in the Bible that he has never heard of. He intends now to study the Bible; where would be a good place to begin? His friend suggests that in the Pastoral Epistles of St. Paul there is a good deal that is very useful to a parish priest. So the perplexed pastor sets to work on the First Epistle to Timothy, where he finds to his confusion that the Apostle declares that a bishop and a deacon must be the husband of one wife. [1]

But quite the most famous of the satirical writings which appeared in Germany during the first half of the sixteenth century is the collection of mock letters known as the *Epistolae Obscurorum*

[1] Lindsay, *The Reformation in Germany*, p. 302. Eberlin declared that 300,000 crowns went each year from Germany to Rome, and that the friars got more than three times as much. He wrote a treatise with the title, *Mich wundert, das kein gelt im land ist*, which was widely read and appreciated.

Virorum. When Reuchlin had been attacked by ignorant bigots for showing that the Vulgate was sometimes incorrect, and for declaring that Jewish literature ought not to be burned, there was published in 1514 a number of letters in his favour under the title, *Clarorum Virorum Epistolae variis temporibus missae ad Johannem Reuchlinum Phorcensen.* This suggested the idea of making his obscurantist opponents ridiculous by publishing a collection of letters professing to be written on their side, but exposing the ignorance, stupidity, hypocrisy, and sensuality of the spiteful monks who were assailing Reuchlin and scholars generally. The style is all the more amusing because the whole reads like a confidential and naive confession out of the assailants' own mouths. These letters are addressed—without his leave and much to his confusion—to the comical person, Ortwin Gratius, whom Luther called *poetista asinus*, and who tried in vain to get this imperishable skit suppressed. In order to expose the ignorance of the supposed writers, the letters are written in dog Latin, through which the German shows its idioms and vocabulary in an absurd manner here and there. But Stokes is inclined to think that the canine Latin is no very extravagant caricature of the " pseudo-vernacular " of the day, and that it appears far more ludicrous in our eyes than it did to contemporaries.

A good idea of the effect may be got from Lord

Dufferin's Latin speech, in his delightful *Letters from High Latitudes* (Murray, 1857). In Iceland, a dinner was given in his honour at the Government House, and a great many toasts had been drunk, when the Bishop rose and proposed Lord Dufferin's health in an eloquent Latin speech. Lord Dufferin was just sufficiently primed to venture to reply in the same language, and this, he tells us, is the kind of Latinity which he produced: *Viri illustres, insolitus ut sum ad publicum loquendum ego propero respondere ad complementum quod recte reverendus prelaticus mihi fecit in proponendo meam salutem; et supplico vos credere quod multum grattificatus et flattificatus sum honore tam distincto. Bibere, viri illustres, res est, quae in omnibus terris domum venit ad hominum negotia et pectora: requirit haustum longum, haustum fortem, et haustum omnes simul: ut canit Poeta, unum tactum Naturae totum orbem facit consanguineum, et hominis natura est bibere.* That may suffice to give some idea of the canine Latin of the *Epistolae*, which are a caricature of monkish disquisitions, animosities, and tastes, as the *Provincial Letters* are of Jesuitical casuistry. A man eats a chicken in an egg, and his conscience is troubled when he remembers that it is Friday. A friend consoles him with the suggestion that an unhatched chicken is no more than the maggots in cheese, which any one may eat on Fridays and vigils. He is not satisfied, because a doctor, who

is a good naturalist, has told him that maggots belong to the order of fishes, which *may* be eaten on fast-days, whereas chickens may *not*. What does Ortwin think? Has he committed a mortal sin? or not even a venial one? [1]

Then there is that rascal Reuchlin, advising people to learn Greek and Hebrew, as if the Scriptures were not much plainer in Latin. It would only make the schismatical Greeks and the infidel Jews proud, if decent Christians took to learning their languages.[2] It is said that the Inquisitor has no more money with which to bribe the judges in Rome, and if that is true, the rascal may be acquitted after all. Can't the Dominicans, with their fine stock of abuse, stop the gab of a layman who dares to dispute with theologians? Then, can it be necessary to eternal salvation that students should learn grammar from profane poets, like Cicero and Pliny? It can't be, because Aristotle says poets tell many lies, and it is sinful to tell lies; therefore to base one's studies upon lies must be sinful. They don't profess to be immaculate; they have

[1] Kidd, *Documents*, p. 11. Other specimens are given in the Appendix to this volume.

[2] Reuchlin's chief interest was in Hebrew. "To Oriental literature he said, Come forth! And the dead came forth, wound round with Rabbinical grave clothes. The second word, reserved for Reuchlin's successors to speak, was far easier, Loose him and let him go!" (Wieland).

their little weaknesses. But even Samson and Solomon were not quite perfect, and the writers have too much humility to wish to be better than those Christian saints. The writers confess that there are some sermons which they cannot approve. One preacher was quite offensively in earnest; no syllogisms, no theological discussion; just a plain sermon about Christ. And the extraordinary thing was that the congregation seemed to like it. Such preaching ought to be forbidden.

They try their hand at etymology, and derive *magister* from *magis* and *ter*, because a *magister* ought to know three times as much as anybody else; but it may come from *magis* and *terreo*, because a master should inspire his pupils with fear. *Seria*, which sometimes means a pot, comes from *Syria*, as first made in that country; or from *serius*, because useful and necessary; or from *series*, because pots stand in a row.

There were forty-one of these letters; to the third edition seven more letters were added. Then the same delightful result followed as that which was produced by Daniel Defoe's *Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (1703). Some of the people who were ridiculed took the satire as a genuine production of their own party, and expressed sympathy. This was too good an opportunity to be missed. In 1517, a second volume, of sixty-two letters, was published, renewing and rubbing in the ridicule,

and this volume soon had an appendix of eight additional letters. Unlike most continuations, it is considered quite equal to the first. "In brilliancy of humour," says Stokes, "and keenness of satire the new *Letters* as a whole were not a whit behind their predecessors." But perhaps one would have sufficed, and much less coarseness would have sufficed. Erasmus tells us that he was delighted with some of the first letters which were shown to him before they were published; and there is a story that he laughed so heartily over one of them that he cured a bad tumour, by causing it to break.[1] But it is certain that he afterwards condemned the *Epistolae*, partly because in later editions his name was introduced in some of them, and partly because he thought the buffoonery overdone. He writes to Caesarius, August 16, 1517: "I highly disapproved of the *Epistles of Obscure Men*. Their pleasantry might amuse at the first glance, if such a precedent had not been too aggressive. I have no objection to the ludicrous, provided it be without insult to any one."

Sir Thomas More was warm in his praise of the book. He wrote to Erasmus in 1516: "It does one's heart good to see how delighted everybody is with the *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum*. The learned are tickled by their humour, while the un-

[1] The story is in the *Life of Bullinger* by J. Simler (*ob.* 1576).

learned deem their teachings of serious worth. When we laugh, they think that we do but deride the style. This they do not defend, but they declare that all faults are compensated by the weight of the matter, and that the rough scabbard contains a brilliant blade! Would that the book had appeared under another title! I verily believe that in a hundred years the dolts would not perceive the nose turned up at them, though longer than the snout of a rhinoceros!" As we have seen, less than a hundred weeks sufficed to produce this result.

It would be interesting to know the private opinion of Leo X respecting the *Epistolae*; he was quite capable of appreciating their raciness. In public he was obliged to condemn them severely. In March, 1517, he published a Bull in which he says: "It has come to our knowledge, to the grievous distress of our mind, that certain children of iniquity, in whose eyes there is no fear of God or man, impelled by wicked, damnable, and reckless loquacity, have published a certain scandalous libel entitled *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum*, and have dared to send it to the ends of the earth, the better to disseminate their wicked calumnies." The faithful are told to give up their copies to be burned, the clergy are to denounce the heretical book from the pulpit, and the authors are declared to be excommunicate.[1]

[1] Stokes, pp. xlix, liv, lv.

The most reasonable conjectures as to authorship are that Crotus Rubianus (Johann Jaeger) planned and wrote much of the first collection, and that Ulrich von Hutten wrote most of the second, although, in a letter to Robert Crocus, he said that he was not the writer. But the authorship is less important than the fact that such an attempt to move public opinion against ecclesiastical authority should be successfully made. It was a very early and "decisive demonstration of the power of the press." [1]

This use of ridicule in the interests of Christian truth is as old as that most amusing work, Tertullian's treatise *Against the Valentinians*. He says that it is only a sham fight before the battle. If there be laughter, it shall be just what the subject requires. There are many things which deserve this kind of treatment; gravity would be too high a compliment. Folly is rightly met by jesting. Even truth may indulge in ridicule, provided that the ridicule is decent (Adv. Valent. 6). But in the *Epistolae* a good deal of the ridicule is not decent.

We may conclude with what Ulrich von Hutten, the probable author of most of the second volume, wrote to Crotus Rubianus, the probable author of most of the first, respecting what he himself had

[1] Lord Acton, *Lectures*, p. 86. There is an excellent edition of the *Epistolae* by F. G. Stokes, with translation and notes, Chatto & Windus, 1909.

seen during his visits to Rome. "You may live from robbery, commit murder and sacrilege, break the laws as you will; your talk may be shameful, your actions criminal; you may revel in lust, and deny God in heaven; but, if you do but bring money to Rome, you are a most respectable person. Virtue and heavenly blessings are bought and sold at Rome. You may even buy the privilege of sinning in future. At that rate, it is madness to be virtuous: sensible people will be wicked." [1]

Venalia nobis
Templa, sacerdotes, altaria, sacra, coronae,
Ignes, terra, preces, coelum est venale, Deusque.[2]

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[1] Strauss, *Ulrich von Hutten*, Eng. tr. by Sturge, 1874, p. 84.

[2] Baptista Mantuanus, *De Calamitatibus Temporum*, lib. iii.

III

THE RENAISSANCE: ERASMUS

A SHALLOW philosophy has suggested the principle that "ridicule is the test of truth." [1] The suggestion is hardly worthy of discussion, and we have no time to discuss it here. But it is worth while to raise the question how far ridicule helped the work of the Reformation. It may be said with confidence that satire and banter did a good deal in preparing the way for the Reformation: whether it did not do as much harm as good, when the conflict had actually begun, is not so easy to decide. The work of the Humanists, and especially of those Humanists who largely employed satire, in preparing for the Reformation, was in the main destructive: ridicule, as a reforming force, can hardly be anything else. They challenged the usurped and tyrannical power of the hierarchy; they mercilessly exposed the folly and stupidity of the greater part of the teaching given not only

[1] The saying is attributed to Lord Shaftesbury, but it is not found in his writings. See Carlyle on Voltaire, in the *Foreign Review*, 1829.

from the pulpit, but even from University chairs; and they taught people to see the debasing character of the numerous superstitions which monks and friars professed (either ignorantly or fraudulently) to regard as efficacious and edifying. Religion, as taught by those in authority and as accepted by those who had any religion at all, had become mainly external, such as the performing of certain acts, being present at services, going on pilgrimages, performing of penances, veneration of relics, and the like; and every one of these, however helpful, or at least innocent, in their origin, had become in practice little better than paganism revived. Services appealed simply to eye and ear, even when they were decently performed; and they were often grossly irreverent. Pilgrimages were picnics, accompanied by drunkenness and lewdness. Penances were often senseless in character, and could be compounded for by payment. Relics were sometimes of the most ludicrous and impossible kind; straw from the manger at Bethlehem and feathers from archangels' wings.[1] All this kind of super-

[1] In the collection at Wittenberg there were 5,005 relics; among them, pieces of the rods of Moses and Aaron and ashes of the burning bush. At Halle there were 8,933 relics; among them, wine from the wedding feast at Cana and some of the earth out of which Adam was made. In ridicule of such things Luther advertised "a piece of the left horn of Moses, three flames from the burning bush, and a lock of Beelzebub's beard."

stition supplied boundless material for satire, and satire might be useful in putting a check upon it.

The ignorance of the clergy was another topic which gave many openings to the satirist; and, as is commonly the case in corrupt times, it was those whose duty it was to put an end to such ignorance who were least aware of its existence. Bishops did not visit their clergy; they did not know, and they did not care to know, what kind of priests were ministering to the people. Luther suspected that things were bad in Saxony, and at his suggestion a visitation was held, and he was one of the visitors. He has left us a report, which shows us how well grounded his suspicions were. Some villagers did not know the Lord's Prayer; they said that it was too long to learn by heart. In one village not a single peasant knew any prayer whatever. In another there was an old priest who could scarcely repeat either the Lord's Prayer or the Creed, but who made a good income by counteracting the spells of witches. And this view of the functions of a priest was common enough, especially in Italy. He might be utterly ignorant or grossly immoral; but he had control of unseen powers. His blessings were worth having for oneself, and his curses for the confusion of one's enemies.

Is this ignorance of the clergy a point which might have been mentioned among the differences between the English and the Continental Reforma-

tions? There is not much reason for thinking so. In 1551, Bishop Hooper held a Visitation of the diocese of Gloucester. He asked his clergy these questions: How many Commandments are there? Where are they found? Repeat them. What are the Articles of the Faith? Repeat them. Prove them from Scripture. Repeat the Lord's Prayer. Where is it found? Out of 311 clergy, only fifty answered all these simple questions, and of these fifty there were nineteen who answered only *mediocriter*. Eight could not answer a single question, and one knew that there were ten Commandments, but knew nothing else. There was plenty of material for gibes and jokes in such a condition of things as this, especially as the New Learning spread and knowledge was increased.

The Renaissance opened up a promising sphere of activity for the *condottieri* of literature. It has been pointed out that one tendency of the Renaissance was to exalt the dignity of the individual as distinct from the body to which he might belong, and to reveal the natural value of each single person.[1] Every one who had a gift, if it was only a fluent

[1] That is what is meant by Humanism—a right appreciation of the dignity of man, who has been placed in the world with the capacity for using and enjoying the good things which the world offers. Humanism stimulated the powers of each individual, claiming for each a freedom of thought and action, which had been denied to him both in ecclesiastical and social life for centuries.

tongue, could attract attention by proposing startling innovations or attacking venerable institutions : and it might easily happen that the individual combatants were far more interesting than the subjects about which they disputed. Whether it was on the dispensing power of the Pope or the sacrifice of the Mass, the value of indulgences or the necessity of fasting, the realism of the new art or the worthlessness of the old philosophy, any man could get a hearing, if only he could put his points with some cleverness ; and anybody could raise a laugh, if only he could make established things look ridiculous.

In Italy, the Renaissance was unproductive in the religious sphere. Excepting Laurentius Valla, hardly any of the Italian Humanists did anything for the recovery or illumination of religious truth. He showed that the Donation of Constantine was a fable,[1] that there were faults in the Vulgate, and that the Apostles' Creed could hardly have been

[1] Valla's treatise on the Donation came into the hands of Luther in February, 1520, and it seems to have put the finishing touch to the conviction which had been growing in his mind that the Pope's claim to temporal power was a usurpation. Hence the increased vigour of his writings in that year. Ulrich von Hutten dedicated a reprint of Valla's treatise to Leo X. The wording of the dedication was respectful, but there was much irony in dedicating such a work to a Pope who cared chiefly for the temporal advantages of his office.

composed by the Apostles; and he wrote notes on the New Testament. But neither he nor any of the early Humanists used the New Learning either to defend or to attack the doctrines of the Church. Their attitude towards the Christian faith was one of well-bred reserve. It was gratuitous *gaucherie* to pose as an unbeliever, when no one supposed that you were serious in professing to believe. Erudition and classical elegance were the things to be cultivated, and to study the Vulgate or the Latin Fathers was fatal to the acquisition of a Ciceronian style. How very little interest the Italian Humanists had in Christianity is shown by the fact that printing had been going on for sixty years, and some works (it is said) had been published eighty or a hundred times, before any one thought of publishing a Greek Testament.[1]

Beyond all question, the best representative of the most fruitful elements in the Renaissance is Erasmus. He sums up in himself its love of the past, its devotion to literature, its enthusiasm for culture, its scorn of ignorance and superstition, its appreciation of ideas, and its indifference to niceties of doctrine. Wisdom and morality were to him of far more account than speculative dogmas or scholastic subtleties; and this was the case with

[1] See Ranke, *Hist. of the Popes*, I, ch. iii, § 4. He points out that it was beauty of form which the Italians chiefly cultivated. Religion was ignored as obsolete.

nearly all the best Humanists. He knew that doctrine was a powerful aid to living a godly life, and he saw no reason for preferring other doctrines to those which were taught by the Church; but these must be freed from the contemptible excrescences with which the ignorance, avarice, and pride of priests and monks had overlaid them. It is here that Erasmus was such a puzzle, and seemed to be such a timid time-server, to the men of his own generation, and that he remains much the same to ourselves. Erasmus was resolved to remain a loyal Catholic; yet he must denounce stupid and debasing superstitions. But how much of what the mediaeval Church taught was Catholic truth, and how much was superstitious perversion of it or pagan addition to it? It was difficult to attack the latter without seeming to attack the former, and the critic might easily make mistakes in drawing the line between them. Few men, even among Protestants or sceptics, have assailed the vices and follies of monks and priests with more incisive ridicule than Erasmus; and to the ordinary reader he seemed to be assailing the whole ecclesiastical system. As regards effects, although not as regards intention, the ordinary reader was not far wrong. Erasmus was quite sincere in declaring, more and more decidedly and loudly as time went on and as Luther's attitude became more pronounced, that he was not a Lutheran and had no

intention of becoming one. But his writings as a whole, and especially those which were most widely read, told far more against the Church of Rome than for it; and, according to the principles and policy of the time, Paul IV was quite right in placing the writings on the Index.

In this matter, Erasmus was not unlike the historian Guicciardini. Guicciardini was the younger contemporary of Erasmus, and, as the unscrupulous factotum of Leo X and Clement VII, he knew the dark corners of ecclesiastical policy and practice far better. His father had not allowed him to gratify his insatiable ambition by becoming an ecclesiastic, because of the unutterable corruption of the Papacy and the Curia. So Guicciardini entered the Law and became a diplomatist and statesman in the service of the Popes. In conviction and profession he remained an adherent of the Roman Church; but he loathed, even more intensely than Erasmus did, the clergy and the Papal Court, whose dirty work he cynically executed with consummate industry and skill. In Italy, "to unravel plots and weave counterplots; to meet treachery with fraud; to parry force with sleights of hand; to credit human nature with the basest motives, while the blackest crimes were contemplated with cold enthusiasm for their cleverness, was reckoned then the height of political sagacity. Guicciardini could play the game to

perfection." This is how he writes of his employers:

"It would be impossible to speak so ill of the Roman Court as it deserves, so that more abuse would not be merited, seeing that it is an infamy—an example of all the shames and scandals of the world. I do not know a man that is more disgusted than I am with the ambition, greed, and unmanliness of the priests."

And this is his own shameless excuse for scheming and working in the interests of a government which he so justly despised and abhorred.

"My position under several Popes has compelled me to desire their aggrandisement *for the sake of my own profit.* Otherwise, I should have loved Martin Luther as myself—not that I might break loose from the laws which Christianity imposes on us, but that I might see that gang of scoundrels stripped either of their vices or of their power."

Guicciardini was a little younger than Machiavelli, whom he criticized as an amiable enthusiast, because, although, like himself, he regarded moral principles as having as little to do with the art of government as with the art of navigation, yet in Machiavelli there still survives some glow of patriotism. The *Principe* of Machiavelli has often been condemned in strong terms; but the *Ricordi Politici* of Guicciardini has been described as "Italian corruption reduced to a code and raised into a rule of life."

It is here that the parallel between Erasmus and Guicciardini ends, and becomes a contrast. Both of them hated the wickedness and folly of priests and Papalists, and both of them resolved to remain in the Roman Church in spite of these things, which Erasmus believed to be curable, though Guicciardini perhaps did not. But what is certain is, that Guicciardini was willing, for the sake of his own profit and power, to work hard in support of the system which he abhorred, while Erasmus, at the risk of liberty, and perhaps of life, continued to ridicule and condemn it. But we will not part from Guicciardini without two more quotations, one of which excites our pity and the other our admiration.

"All states," he says, "are mortal: everything, either by nature or by accident, comes to a close. Hence a citizen who finds himself witnessing the dissolution of his country need not so much groan over this misfortune as over his own lot, in having been born in a time when the hour of his country's doom has struck."

That is sad and selfish rather than heroic; Seneca, or Epictetus, or Marcus Aurelius would give us better counsel than that. But here is something which is worthy of the best Stoicism and not unworthy of a Christian.

"Do not be afraid of benefiting man, simply because you see that ingratitude is so common; for, besides the fact that a temper of benevolence

(in itself, and without any other object) is a generous quality and in a way divine, you now and again find some one exhibiting such gratitude as richly to compensate for the ingratitude of all the rest." [1]

Where Machiavelli and Guicciardini went wrong was in supposing that moral principles, that is, just those forces by means of which societies are held together and nations are exalted, can be set aside in politics. What is required for strong government, they said, is acute intelligence backed by remorseless vigour. The cunning to plan and the force to strike—these are essential; perfidy and cruelty are admissible, if required; truth and equity are irrelevant. In statesmanship there are no crimes, only blunders. Let the ruler be loved, if he can; but it is absolutely essential that he should be feared. "Praised be those who love their country more than the safety of their souls." [2]

It is this ignoring of moral principles, to say nothing of Providence, which makes these two

[1] See Morley's Essays on Guicciardini and Machiavelli; also *Enc. Brit.*, 11th ed., xii, pp. 684, 685.

[2] In his Essay on Ranke's *Popes*, Macaulay says, "Neither the spirit of Savonarola nor the spirit of Machiavelli had anything in common with the spirit of the religious or political Protestants of the North." That is true of Machiavelli; but in 1523 Luther republished Savonarola's Commentary on the Psalms. The two Italians can dissect with cold-blooded skill, but neither of them recognizes the magnitude of the forces that were at work under what they dissected.

writers unsafe guides in estimating the forces which determined the course of the Reformation. We are in safer hands when we follow the guidance of Erasmus, although he requires some supplementing and correcting, if we are to arrive at a fair judgment.

The words of Drummond respecting him will bear quoting once more:

"Erasmus was in his own age the apostle of commonsense and of rational religion. He did not care for dogma, and accordingly the dogmas of Rome, which had the consent of the Christian world, were in his eyes preferable to the dogmas of Protestantism. . . . From the beginning to the end of his career he remained true to the purpose of his life, which was to fight the battle of sound learning and plain common sense against the powers of ignorance and superstition; and amid all the convulsions of that period he never once lost his mental balance." [1]

There were other good qualities which he did not lose, and some which he acquired or improved. But there were also some which he did not possess, and which he never acquired. He himself confessed that he lacked the spirit of a martyr; and we may say that he lacked the strength of mind which is required for the work of a reformer at a crisis in which reforms, on a large scale and without

[1] *Life of Erasmus*, ii, pp. 355, 356.

much delay, were righteously and clamorously demanded. There was hardly a practice or a doctrine of the Roman clergy that Luther endeavoured to reform which had not previously been criticized or ridiculed by Erasmus. Erasmus, like Luther, contends for the individual responsibility of man to God without intermediate agency, and he denies the mediatorial function of a sacerdotal order. He declares that much of the religion which priests and monks teach the people is mere paganism, with the names of saints and angels substituted for those of gods and goddesses. And, although the *Praise of Folly* is on the surface (what the *Ship of Fools* is in reality) a skit on human follies in general, yet it is in fact a satirical exposure of the follies and frauds of those who professed to represent the Catholic Church.[1] In the sphere of religion, the whole hierarchy of Rome from the Pope downwards, together with the majority of the laity, are shown to be egregious fools.

The Spaniard Stunica sent to Leo X a list of thousands of heretical expressions collected out of the writings of Erasmus. To such as Stunica it was, no doubt, shocking to read exposures of the

[1] Pennington, *Life and Character of Erasmus*, pp. 77–102. The *Encomium Moriae* was written in a week (from notes previously accumulated) in the house of Sir Thomas More in London. It is said that Erasmus did not mean to publish it; but the printer Badius in Paris got hold of a copy, and printed it in 1512.

ridiculous and irreverent problems which theologians sometimes discussed; such as, whether any time was required for the Divine Generation; whether God could have taken the form of a woman, or an ass, or a pumpkin; whether a pumpkin could have preached and worked miracles. And it was unpleasing to be told that theologians were rather dangerous persons to deal with in dispute, because they come down on their opponents with hundreds of proved conclusions and call on them to recant; and then, if one refuses to recant, one is denounced as a heretic. This was exactly what Stunica did. But Leo X was not a rigorous champion of orthodoxy, and perhaps Stunica's private denunciation of Erasmus did not do the latter much harm. There was a little more peril when the University of Paris publicly condemned the *Colloquies*. Yet, in spite of his audacious utterances, Erasmus was never molested by either inquisitor or prince, and the University's condemnation was really a magnificent advertisement.[1]

But, in spite of this large amount of agreement with Luther, Erasmus was quite unable to take the same line as Luther. Luther felt that they were not in harmony, yet he tried to make himself the humble ally of a scholar whose reputation

[1] Erasmus was not very pleased when the *Colloquies* became far the best known of all his writings,—"a book full of foolish things."

already stood so high in Europe. As early as March 1, 1517, Luther had written to John Lange: "I am at present reading over Erasmus, *but my heart recoils from him more and more.*" [1] In 1518, he wrote to John Reuchlin, another great light of the Renaissance, saying that he did not possess Reuchlin's learning or ability, but they were fighting for the same cause. Luther no doubt believed this, yet it was only partly true, for Luther was not a Humanist, and Reuchlin was not a Reformer. The next year, 1519, Luther wrote a similar letter to Erasmus, who from the first was not much more than stiffly neutral, and ended in being bitterly hostile. Erasmus took time to answer him. At last came a frigid letter, in which he gently declined to take sides. He had read Luther's Notes on the Psalms and had liked them, but he had not read any of his other writings, and therefore could express no opinion about them, but they seemed to be causing a great deal of excitement. His own view was that these discussions should be confined to the learned, who would be able to debate such matters without heat. Erasmus frequently excused himself from giving any judgment respecting Luther, by saying that he had read so few of his

[1] M. A. Currie, *Letters of Martin Luther*, pp. 13, 38f, The words in italics are too strong for *et indies decrescit mihi animus erga eum.* See B. J. Kidd, *Documents illustrative of the Continental Reformation*, p. 54.

writings. Luther made no reply, but he did read the writings of Erasmus, and as late as April, 1524, he could still write affectionately to him, while lamenting his timidity: "We have borne your weakness patiently and highly appreciate your gifts." Five years later, however, he writes very bitterly about him, as raging against the Lutherans: "He is a thoughtless Indifferentist, who ridicules all religion in his Lucian fashion." [1]

Their estrangement was not very wonderful. They agreed chiefly in what they condemned and wished to destroy—immorality, greed, fraud, ignorance, and superstition, especially in the lives of monks and clergy. What Erasmus ridiculed, Luther denounced. With regard to reconstruction they had not much in common; nor could they have, for Erasmus did not want to reconstruct anything. He wished to retain the existing edifice and to free it from overgrowths and filth. Moreover, he was content to work slowly, and to trust a great deal to the gradual spread of knowledge. He had nothing of the burning zeal which made Luther so vehement and so courageous. He was naturally, if not exactly timid, yet very much averse to violent language and violent measures—indeed, to everything which might provoke what he called a *tumultus*,

[1] Currie, pp. 123, 191. Luther told Erasmus that he was trying to walk on eggs without breaking them—*auf Eyern gehen und keines zutreten.*

and which we may perhaps translate "a beastly row." He was a lover of peace and of gentle methods, and he declared that he so abhorred all sorts of quarrels, that, if he had a large estate to defend at law, he would sooner lose it than litigate it. Luther said of him, "Erasmus knows very well how to expose error, but he does not know how to teach the truth." In 1536, when he had quite broken with Erasmus, Luther thus compared him with himself, Melanchthon, and Carlstadt: "Erasmus has good words to no purpose; Luther has good purpose, but good words won't come; Melanchthon has both, and Carlstadt neither." [1]

But Erasmus deserves a better estimate than that. He was the greatest figure of the Renaissance, the best representative of the New Learning that any country produced. And he was the most cosmopolitan. Born, educated, and ordained in Holland, he had lived in France, Belgium, England, Italy, Switzerland, and Germany; and, although he derived something from every one of these nationalities, yet he did not belong to any one of them more than to the rest, and (what is rather remarkable in such a scholar) he seems to have mastered the language of none of them. The language which Erasmus wrote and spoke was Latin; not the

[1] *Res et verba Philippus; verba sine re Erasmus; res sine verbis Lutherus; nec res nec verba Caralostadius.* The saying has been adapted to other persons in our own times.

Latin of the classics or of the Fathers, but a Latin of his own; neither Ciceronian nor elegant, but conversational, pointed, and vigorous; and intelligible to every one who knew Latin of any kind. Mark Pattison says that the Latin style of Erasmus is "the most delightful which the Renaissance has left us." And Erasmus talked with so many influential persons in Europe that he would have been an international force, if he had written only a quarter of his actual works.

In the early days of his brilliant career, he was much more of a scholar than a theologian, and even in his later years he cared much more for religion than for theology. This was one of the things which checked sympathy between him and Luther. Luther cared little for literary culture, and Erasmus cared still less for Lutheran theology. If one must have theology in addition to the simple teaching of the Bible, he preferred that which had the sanction of time and of the Church. The essence of Christianity, according to him, is the love of God and the love of one's neighbour manifesting itself in sympathy and forbearance. Love was the motive power in the life of Christ, and it ought to be the motive power in the life of every Christian. In an excellent letter to the Bohemian, John Schlechta, he says: "Many might be reconciled to the Church of Rome, if we did not define everything exactly, and were contented with those

doctrines which are laid down in the Holy Scriptures and are necessary to salvation. These are few in number." [1] His " Dagger of the Christian Soldier," *Enchiridion Militis Christiani*,[2] written in 1501, and republished in 1518 with a letter defending its contents, shows us both his earlier and his riper thoughts on Christianity, which is held to consist, not so much in the belief of certain doctrines, as in the practice of patience, purity, and love. He says that he wrote the *Enchiridion* to correct those who make religion consist in external observances, while they neglect inward piety.

Like his younger contemporary Zwingli, who was another enthusiastic Humanist, Erasmus had no such contempt for the human reason as Luther had. Natural religion, though inferior to the Gospel, is acceptable with the Father of all; and Cicero and Socrates may win salvation as well as St. Paul. Erasmus was convinced that such moral teachers as these had the true spirit of Christianity and might be called Christians before Christ. Cicero had as much right to a high place in heaven as many a canonized saint, and when one thought of the Athenian martyr, one felt inclined to pray, *Sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis.*

That Erasmus should select just these two heathen

[1] Pennington, p. 202.

[2] " Dagger," not " handbook," is right; Erasmus himself calls it *pugiunculus*.

teachers is of interest, for both of them have points of contact with himself—Cicero with regard to his subsequent fame, and Socrates with regard to a leading feature in his teaching. The reputation of both Cicero and Erasmus would probably be less disputed and more generally accepted as excellent, if not quite such a large number of their letters had survived. Men, who might otherwise have seemed to be almost heroic, have written themselves down as very human indeed. Again, the moral teaching of Socrates is built upon the principle that "virtue is knowledge." If a man knows what is really good for him, he is sure to seek it. Men go wrong through ignorance; they think that vice is good for them. Prove to them that this is an error, and they will cease to follow vice. Erasmus was just as firmly persuaded that the remedy for the frightful evils, which disgraced the Church and dismayed all serious persons, was to be found in increase of knowledge. He believed that these evils could be gradually driven out under the influence of ridicule and common sense. "Give light," he said, "and the darkness will disperse of itself." That is a comfortable metaphor; but to suppose that mankind will always seek what is good for them when they know it, and that to expose abuses and make them look ridiculous will suffice to effect their reform, is to leave out of the account the unruly wills and affections of sinful men. And

Erasmus seems to have been not alone in this opinion. There were other Humanists who were disposed to think that sarcasm, elegantly expressed and accompanied by culture and good taste, would heal the running sores of society and bring back the beauties of a Christian life. It is true that some of these Humanists had somewhat defective conceptions of what a Christian life meant; they thought of it as refinement freed from superstition. But Erasmus knew better than this: and, although he had not had Luther's terrible experiences, he must have been aware that something more than banter and culture was needed to give relief to the stricken conscience and strength to the enfeebled will. His idea seems to have been that, if the simple moral teaching of the Gospel were persistently inculcated, differences about doctrine and discipline would lose their interest, because people would at last see that, as compared with the obligations of morality, niceties of doctrine and other religious details were of slight importance. It was in this way that he was able to maintain his position in the Church of Rome. He did not care to study its theology or any theology. If there must be theology, he was content to acquiesce in what was traditional and well-established, which for that reason was more worthy of respect than the brand-new theories of a man who had so little sympathy with literature as Luther. Melanchthon,

who had much more sympathy with literature than Luther had, thus distinguished the work of the two leaders to whom he owed so much. "In theology we seek two things. One is to be consoled and admonished with respect to death and God's judgment, and to have our hearts strengthened against the artifices of Satan and the powers of hell; this is the true preaching of the Gospel, unknown to the world and to all human reason. This is taught by Luther, and is piety of the heart, which immediately bears good works. The other concerns good morals and proper conduct. To this end all that Erasmus teaches is directed. But this was taught even by the heathen philosophers." [1] We, however, are bound to add all that Erasmus did in recovering a knowledge of Christian morality by his Greek Testament and his editions of the Fathers. It was a Christian Humanism that he desired to establish, and his moral philosophy was based neither on the heathen philosophers nor on the Christian Fathers, nor even on St. Paul, whose writings, he said, ought to be learned by heart, but on the Sermon on the Mount and on the Gospel Parables. This he declared to be the true "heavenly philosophy." God had prepared the way for it by earlier and less clear revelations of His will, and these had been perfected and superseded by the

[1] *The Lutheran Encyclopedia*, p. 168.

teaching of Jesus Christ. All that is good in us comes from God; the evil comes from our own wills, which have abused their freedom by choosing that which is contrary to God's will; and from the consequences of this rebellious choice, the death of Christ upon the Cross is our sole deliverance. It is misleading to hint that the ethical teaching of Erasmus does not rise higher than that of Socrates or Seneca. Nor is it quite fair to say that he is an advocate for what we call "undogmatic Christianity." Dogma there must be; but the dogmas that are necessary for salvation are simple and few.[1]

[1] F. M. Schiele, *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* ii, 427.

IV

THE MERITS AND SHORTCOMINGS OF ERASMUS

APPARENTLY Erasmus did not know, and did not wish to be convinced, that the evils of the time required stronger and sharper measures than those which he was able and willing to employ. There was a huge jungle, in which most of the vegetation was hopelessly corrupt and could bear no good fruit. But it had life enough in it to endure, and to continue to choke the one tree whose leaves might serve for the healing of the nations. Nothing less drastic than the axe would have been of any use; and Erasmus proposed to turn the wilderness into a garden by gradual and persistent pruning. What Luther said of the trifling reforms, which were every now and then proposed by a Pope, who at least wished to make a show of doing something, would apply here: "They piffled at curing warts, while they overlooked or confirmed ulcers." In short, the time for a serious battle had come, and Erasmus rather petulantly proposed, and continued to employ, a diverting policy of pin-pricks. It

was not magnificent, and it certainly was not war.

Yet Erasmus did not spare himself. He did not look on and criticize, while he left others to do the work. His industry was extraordinary, and it reminds us of Origen and Jerome. It is all the more amazing, when we remember that he suffered from chronic weak health, and was sometimes seriously ill. He was at times plagued with stone, and in his later days with gout. He had a capricious digestion, and he could not endure the smell or taste of fish. His heart, he said, was Catholic, but his stomach was Lutheran ; not even on fast-days would it take fish. Yet, in addition to his numerous writings, he kept up a voluminous correspondence with all kinds of people, high and low ; often with persons whom he had never seen, and of whom he knew nothing but what their letters told him. He sometimes wrote forty letters in a day, and about 3,000 still survive. He wrote fast, as did Luther, and he says of himself, " I precipitate rather than compose." This heavy correspondence was a voluntary addition to the heavy amount of literary work, in editing Fathers, etc., which he undertook for the great printer Froben, and for others. But he says himself that these demands upon his pen caused him more pleasure than fatigue. The more he wrote, the more he wished to write : *crescit scribendo scribendi studium.* Without literary work, life to him was not worth living.

Erasmus lived for literature, and especially for literature devoted to a religious purpose. It was for this that he so carefully guarded one kind of independence, while he seems to us to have sacrificed another kind. He kept the command of his own time and of his own mode of employment. He freed himself, so far as was possible, from his obligations as a priest. He might, if he had liked, have become a Bishop or a Cardinal; but he knew that, if he accepted what so many clerics were scheming and sinning to obtain, his time would no longer be his own. Yet he needed money and plenty of it, and he did not much care from whom he received it. He had not much feeling about independence with regard to that. He showed much deference to those who helped him or might be induced to help him financially, and his enemies might say that he sometimes condescended to be a toady. But we must remember that in those days it was a recognized thing that an impecunious author was dependent upon the benevolence of the wealthy. Not until a century or two later was a writer paid by the public who bought his books; he had to rely upon the gifts of a few rich patrons: and Erasmus, whose expenses were heavy, took money from a number of benefactors in various countries.

English people were generous to him, especially Archbishop Warham. Erasmus says of him: "He

has given me a living worth a hundred nobles, and has changed it, at my request, for a pension of a hundred crowns. Within these few years he has given me more than four hundred nobles without my asking. One day he gave me one hundred and fifty. From other Bishops I have received more than one hundred. Lord Mountjoy has appointed me a pension of hundred crowns." Colet gave him fifteen angels for a dedication, and other people promised him a good deal. He seems to have made a good deal of money by writing dedications, which no doubt were expected to be laudatory. Not long before his death, both Cranmer and Cromwell sent him donations, and at an earlier period Pope Clement VII sent him two hundred florins.

This money was to a large extent spent in travelling, which in those days was very expensive, except for those who had strength enough and courage enough to travel on foot. To Erasmus travel was a necessity during a great part of his life, partly because of his constitutional restlessness, and partly because of the character which he so soon established of being an international leader in the New Learning. His weak health required him to travel in what was regarded in those days as comfort, viz., with two horses and one or two attendants. He wrote to Warham in 1521: "I think myself a sort of nobleman, for I maintain two horses, who are better fed, and two servants, who are better

clad, than their master." Even with these advantages he was sometimes miserably ill on his journeys. He occasionally borrowed a horse from a friend, and did not always return it. On one occasion, instead of returning the horse, he sent an unworthy and profane joke.

This intense devotion to literature in the one leader and not in the other was one of the causes of the rupture between Erasmus and Luther. Erasmus was content to work on ploddingly towards something like the ideal sketched by Plato; not exactly that kings should be philosophers, and philosophers, kings—Erasmus did not care much about philosophy; but that there might be a condition of things in which rulers should be scholars, and scholars rule. Luther had no patience with such methods. Ignorance was not the only enemy, and the souls in darkness needed something better than epigrams and editions of the Fathers. To Erasmus, Luther's indifference to literature was shocking.[1] The revival of learning was the aim of Erasmus's life; the revival of Christian learning was the aim of the latter half of it. When he asks, What is life without letters? he gives us the clue to a good deal that is puzzling in his seeming incon-

[1] Erasmus tells us that he could not live in his native country, because of Dutch devotion to substantial meals and indifference to literature. He called Holland "Beer-and-Butter-Land."

sistencies. And when he declares that the Lutherans are the enemies of literature, he is placing them on the same level with the monks whom he treated with such scorn. No more severe condemnation could be given. To the Archbishop of Cologne he wrote: "I abhor the Evangelicals, as for other reasons, so because it is through them that literature is declining in every place, and is upon the point of perishing: and, without literature, what is life?"[1] To the Chancellor of Mons he wrote: "I have an irreconcilable war with all Lutherans. I cannot love heresy and schism; I cannot hate literature." Yet, on Galatians i. 6, Luther himself laments the decay of learning. There are very many people who *non solum sacras literas sed etiam omnes alias literas fastidiunt et contemnunt.*[2]

For many years Erasmus was in a strange position in Europe. If he had many friends and admirers in almost every country, he had everywhere made foes. A writer who used ridicule and sarcasm so frequently and with such skill was sure to do that. And he spared no one. It is a mistake to suppose that he reserved these weapons for ignorant monks and clergy, or even for ecclesiastical abuses in

[1] Seneca had said much the same: *Otium sine literis mors est et hominis vivi sepultura* (Ep. lxxxii. 3).

[2] On Luther's break with Humanism see A. C. McGiffert, *Martin Luther, the Man and his Work*, ch. xviii; B. J. Kidd, *Documents illustrative of the Continental Reformation*, p. 170.

general. Kings and princes come under his lash. In the *Adagia* attacks upon them are common. This famous book was published first in 1500, when Erasmus had not yet mastered Greek, and it consisted of some hundreds of proverbs and other utterances, with observations upon them. Some of the observations are of this kind: "The people build cities, princes pull them down. The industry of citizens creates riches for the rapacity of lords to plunder. Magistrates of the people pass good laws, and kings violate them." By 1508 the hundreds had grown to thousands, and the book was republished with the title, *Chiliades Adagiorum*. It was so pungent in attacking abuses that the Council of Trent wished to suppress it; but it was so popular that all that they ventured to do was to publish an expurgated edition.

Surprise is sometimes expressed that Erasmus was never prosecuted for so ceaselessly holding up to ridicule the powers that be, both in Church and State. The Dominicans did their utmost to get him condemned at Rome, but they never could succeed, and he was never seriously molested anywhere. It seems a strange thing to say of a single scholar, who was so poor as to live on the bounty of wealthy patrons; but he was really too powerful to be prosecuted. He had already made himself the darling, of not only the increasing army of scholars, but of every one who could enjoy polished

witticisms, *before* the controversies which set Western Christendom in a blaze had begun. Camerarius wrote of him: "The man who can draw a letter from Erasmus at once acquires immense fame and celebrates a lordly triumph; but the man who has a conversation or a walk with him is in the seventh heaven. Every one who does not wish to be regarded as a stranger in the realm of the Muses, admires, praises, and glorifies him." Hardly any one had any idea of the revolution for which these witticisms were preparing the way; and not a few, even of those who were hit by them, were quite content to laugh with the rest. Such exquisite raillery was worth an occasional smart. Moreover, the jests of Erasmus are full of common sense and sound advice. If he had not Luther's power of touching men's hearts, he could rouse and convince their minds.[1] He was no apostle; but, in an age in which scholarship was regarded as almost divine, Erasmus was a king among scholars, with no one anywhere near him in the same field; and he was allowed the privilege embodied in the principle that "the king can do no wrong."

There was another thing which helped to preserve

[1] The Roman writer, J. M. Stone (*Reformation and Renaissance*, p. 163) is too severe when he says of Erasmus, "with cold penetrating eyes he detected the ills from which Christianity lay bleeding, but he tells the story with mocking lips and with heart unmoved. He has whips and scorpions, but no tears."

him from prosecution: both sides hoped to have this powerful controversialist as an ally. He had said so much in condemnation of Popes, prelates, monkery, and the mediaeval system generally, that the Lutherans claimed him and hoped to gain him. In August, 1523, Erasmus himself wrote to Zwingli: "It seems to me that I have taught nearly all the things which Luther teaches.[1] The only difference is that I have taught them less fiercely (*atrociter*), and that I have kept clear of certain riddles and paradoxes." But this fierceness of Luther and Hutten and others made Erasmus more and more determined not to join them, but to go on dealing with the controversy in his own way. The next year, 1524, Erasmus published his *Spongia*, in which he takes a mediating position. If only each side would state its case with moderation, no fundamental difference would be found to exist between the two. It is the exaggerations of the extremists that make an understanding impossible. Let a number of learned persons meet and discuss the points of difference; then a great deal might be done to heal the strife. This neutral position was very distasteful to the Lutherans, and very

[1] Five years earlier, Martin Bucer, at that time (1518) still a Dominican, had heard Luther argue at the Convention of the Augustinians at Heidelberg, and he declared that Luther agreed exactly with Erasmus, but that Luther said openly what Erasmus only insinuated.

disappointing to the Romanists. Adrian VI [1] twice wrote to him, imploring him, out of regard to his reputation, to take up his pen against these novel heresies. His successor, Clement VII, with Charles V and Henry VIII, all of them expected him to come out of the trenches and attack Luther in the open field; but, excepting a few shots in letters and pamphlets, he did nothing. He wrote to Clement and apologized for the rudeness of his earlier writings; if he had foreseen the sectarians of that day, he would have suppressed a good deal. Clement sent him a donation of 200 florins, and told the monks who had been abusing Erasmus to keep their tongues quiet. Erasmus continued to criticize the old scholasticism, and to point out the contrast between the primitive and the mediaeval Church; but, in the end, his disgust at Luther's methods was almost as great as his disgust at those of the monks.

His refusal to receive the vagabond Hutten,[2]

[1] Kidd, *Documents*, p. 105. "It was his duty," Adrian said, "to use his great gifts in defence of the Church." "What must have been the prostration of the Church, when she humbly, and almost on her knees, implored Erasmus for help against Luther, and the great indifferentist refused with the remark, I told you what was coming" (Mozley, *Essays*, i, p. 375).

[2] Hutten had played an unworthy trick on Erasmus. In a letter to Cardinal Albert of Mainz Erasmus had said that one could not take it much amiss, if Luther, in such trying circumstances, allowed himself to be very angry;

when the latter fled to Basle in his hour of need, increased the estrangement between Erasmus and Luther. Then came the controversy about freewill, which placed them before the world as opponents. Luther, like Zwingli and Calvin, denied freewill; and Erasmus, urged on by Henry VIII, attacked him for doing so. Perhaps the controversy was not unwelcome to Erasmus. It enabled him definitely to take up a position of direct opposition to Luther, without retracting anything which he had said on the Lutheran side. Harnack regards the *De libero arbitrio* as the crown of all the writings of Erasmus, but a very worldly treatise, and deeply irreligious.[1] Near the end of 1525, Luther replied

and he had entrusted the letter to Hutten to deliver to the Cardinal. Instead of doing so, Hutten printed it, with "Luther" changed to "*our* Luther," hoping thus to commit Erasmus to Luther's side.

[1] *Dogmengeschichte*, iii, p. 714. On the other hand, Mark Pattison thinks that Erasmus "is at his weakest in defending freewill against Luther; and indeed he can hardly be said to enter on the metaphysical question." The problem of freewill will always continue to be discussed, because it is insoluble; but to ask whether the will is free is not the best way of stating it. Is man free? Or, Has man a will? Will is the power to choose, and a will that has no power to choose is a contradiction (W. Temple, *The Nature of Personality*, p. 26).

In the very year in which he attacked Luther on the subject of man's freedom (1524), Erasmus wrote to Melanchthon, that hitherto he had abstained from denouncing what he disapproved in Luther, for fear of weakening the things in which he agreed with him. "Indeed, I take

in his famous *De servo arbitrio*, perhaps the most carefully written of all his works, and one of the most dignified in tone. Erasmus soon answered it with his *Hyperaspistes*, in which he says: "Luther promises himself a wonderful reputation with posterity; but I am inclined to predict that no name under the sun will be held in greater execration." He was very angry; and this rupture between the two leaders may be said to mark the final break between Humanism and Lutheranism. No disciple of the Renaissance, which had insisted so clearly upon the value, and power, and independence of the individual, could assent to the doctrine that there is no such thing as freewill.

Critics are not agreed as to which is the best of the writings of Erasmus, but there is not much doubt as to which was the most important and the most fruitful of results. Quite in the first rank, and in a class by itself, must be placed his Greek Testament. It was produced in a hurry, in order to be in the field before the more carefully prepared edition of Cardinal Ximenes. Erasmus published his in February 1516, and in April he writes to Nicholas Ellenbogen; "The New Testament has been hurried out headlong rather than edited." It was made from a few MSS. of poor authority. Erasmus

every opportunity of trying to make the strong and bitter medicine which Luther has administered to the world, work for the health of the Church."

had not got the materials for constructing a critical text, and he would not have known how to use them, if he had possessed them. Yet it is by means of this hastily produced work that he did most to further the best interests of the Reformation. Not all his wit and learning effected so much real and permanent enlightenment as this imperfect reproduction of the words of Apostles and Evangelists in the original language. According to modern standards of what a critical text ought to be, its imperfections are glaring: but it was the first Greek Testament issued from the printing press, the first that was made accessible to all who could read Greek. Students now saw plainly that what for centuries had been the Bible of Western Christendom was only a translation, and not always a trustworthy translation, of what the inspired writers had penned. Erasmus gave a Latin translation of his own, which differs considerably from the Vulgate. Readers could judge for themselves whether Erasmus or the Vulgate was the better representative of the Greek. He also published *Paraphrases*, which became so famous, that in 1548 it was ordered that a translation of these *Paraphrases* should be placed in every parish church in England, side by side with the English Version of the Bible which had been placed there by order of Henry VIII. Even without these helps, the publication of the Greek text showed that there were many

places in which, although the Vulgate rendering was right, yet the traditional interpretations were quite wrong. The Vulgate might possibly bear the proposed interpretation, but it was impossible to make the Greek do so.

It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that, in publishing Greek Testaments, Erasmus did more to free men's mind from the thraldom of the clergy than all the tumultuous pamphlets of Luther. He had no sympathy with those who thought it dangerous to allow the laity free access to the Bible. In an Exhortation to the Study of the Christian Philosophy which forms the Preface to his New Testament (1st edition, 1516), Erasmus says: "I utterly dissent from those who are unwilling that the sacred Scriptures should be read by the unlearned, translated into their vulgar tongue; as though Christ had taught such subtleties that they can scarcely be understood by a few theologians, or as though the strength of the Christian religion consisted in men's ignorance of it. The mysteries of kings it may be safer to conceal, but Christ wished His mysteries to be published as openly as possible. I wish that even the weakest woman should read the Gospels, should read the Epistles of Paul; and I wish that they were translated into all languages, so that they might be read and understood, not only by Scots and Irishmen, but also by Turks and Saracens. I long that the husbandman should sing

portions of them to himself as he follows the plough, that the weaver should hum them to the tune of his shuttle, that the traveller should beguile with their stories the tedium of his journey." Again and again Erasmus writes of the hearty reception which his New Testament received, even in quarters where opposition might have been expected. Four months after its publication he writes to Bishop Fisher: "This book was feared before its appearance, but now that it is published it is marvellous how it commends itself to all theologians who are either learned or honest." A fortnight later Colet writes to Erasmus (June 20, 1516): "I understand what you say about the New Testament. Your new edition is bought with avidity and is read everywhere here." A year later Fisher writes to him from Rochester: "The New Testament can now be read and understood by every one with much more satisfaction than it could before."

It may seem strange that a man with such deeply religious aims, who lived on a literary tread-mill during the latter portion of his life, in order to give his contemporaries and their successors a better idea of the essentials of Christianity, should have been compared with Voltaire. Erasmus has been called "the Voltaire of the Renaissance." We need not wonder, for the resemblances between the two writers are too obvious to escape notice. And yet a careful comparison leads us rather to a con-

trast. Each of them was the greatest literary power in his own age, and acquired, especially among men of letters, a European reputation. Both of them were courted by kings and princes, and had friends and correspondents in many countries. In a letter to Polydore Virgil in 1527 Erasmus says: "I have drawers full of letters from kings, princes, cardinals, dukes, nobles, bishops, written with the utmost civility. I receive uncommon and valuable presents from many of them." In a later letter he mentions the Emperor, the Archduke Ferdinand, the Kings of France, England and Poland, the Duke of Saxony, Queen Katharine, Archbishop Warham, Bishops Tunstal and Longland, and others. He has closets full of plate, some of it pure gold. Voltaire could have made a similar list. Both had lived in England and admired English ways and English character. Most obviously of all, both were wits, who used irony and ridicule for the destruction of what they believed to be superstition and folly.

But there was this enormous difference between them. Erasmus never attacked the foundations of Christianity. On the contrary, he tried to strengthen them, by freeing both them and the superstructure from worthless or even dangerous additions and corruptions. Still less did he ever suggest any other system as a possible substitute for Christianity. Voltaire did both. He flouted

the Christian faith, and is reported to have said that he was tired of hearing that twelve men had planted the Gospel; he would show that one man could uproot it. And he advocated a creed that was to be not merely a substitute but an improvement. He was no Agnostic. Belief in a just and beneficent God is his creed, and the duty of general benevolence is his decalogue; and this religion he teaches to others in words which always have lucidity and sometimes beauty. *Adorons Dieu sans vouloir percer ses mystères. Il y a un Être nécessaire, éternel, source de tous les êtres; existera-t-il moins parce que nous souffrons? existera-t-il moins parce que je suis incapable d'expliquer pourquoi nous souffrons? Un Dieu adoré de cœur et de bouche et tous les devoirs remplis, font de l'univers un temple et des frères de tous les hommes. Pardonnons aux hommes et qu'on nous pardonne. Je finis par ce souhait unique que Dieu veuille exaucer.* Napoleon said to Roederer: "The more I read Voltaire, the more I like him. He is always reasonable, never a charlatan, never a fanatic; he is made for mature minds."

Nevertheless, in spite of this fundamental difference between Erasmus and Voltaire as regards their attitude to Christianity, in that Erasmus defended it and was patient with it even in its mediaeval form, while Voltaire tried to destroy it and would have substituted Deism for it, yet there is a large amount of real resemblance between the two.

Would not this be true of Erasmus? "In the sympathies which appeal to the deepest feelings in human nature, he was very deficient. But never, perhaps, was there an intellect at once so luminous, versatile, and flexible; which produced so much; which could deal with such a vast range of difficult subjects, without being ever obscure, tangled, or dull." It is what Lecky says of Voltaire.[1] And would not this also be true of him? He knew "how to abide, with an all but purely critical reserve, leaving reconstruction, its form, its modes, its epoch, for the fulness of time to disclose." It is what Morley says of Voltaire.[2]

Erasmus would have effected even more than he did accomplish, if he had not underrated the solidity and permanent power of the evils which he assailed, and which he hoped would in time be banished from the Church and the world. The jealous conservatism of corporations is proverbial, as is also the conservatism of ecclesiastics and of lawyers. A corporation, therefore, which consisted largely of ecclesiastical lawyers, and of ecclesiastics who knew more about Canon Law than about the Bible, and whose interpretations of the Bible were those of long established tradition, was certain to be conservative in the very highest degree. And to all this we must add the fact that the most influential

[1] *History of the Eighteenth Century*, iv, pp. 315, 316.
[2] Essay on Voltaire.

members of the corporation with which the Reformers had to deal were men whose pecuniary interests strongly supported their prejudices in favour of keeping things as they were. The ecclesiastics of the Roman Church stood rigidly on their defence against the first mention of innovations, and denounced those who hinted at opposition to the existing system as rank rebels against the voice of God, who spoke now, they said, as of old, from Rome. The Roman Church was the source and guardian of all Christian truth, and to dissent from its decisions must be heresy. They were never weary of insisting upon the duty of "avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called." In such a corporation, the power of resistance to all attempts at reform was almost boundless. Erasmus seems never to have appreciated the real force of this. His dislike of the violent methods of many of the Reformers at last became so intense that he was willing to tolerate ecclesiastical methods which earlier in his career he had ridiculed or denounced. He went so far as to declare: *Si Paulus hodie viveret, non improbaret praesentem Ecclesiam statum, modo in hominum vitia clamaret.* And, when Oecolampadius died soon after the death of Zwingli in 1531, Erasmus wrote to a friend: *Bene habet, quod duo Choryphaei Evangelicorum perierunt.*[1] Yet he continued to

[1] Herzog und Plitt, 2 Aufl., iv, 289.

work for peace, urging both sides to make concessions and endeavour to find some terms of peace; e.g., in *De sarcienda Ecclesiae concordia*, 1533.

It was about this time that Luther said of him: "Erasmus has fulfilled the mission to which he has been called. He has introduced the classical languages, and withdrawn us from godless studies. Possibly he will die with Moses in the wilderness of Moab, for he does not lead to the better studies which promote godliness. My only wish is that he would cease from commenting on Holy Scripture." That last sentence shows how wide the distance between them had become.

Erasmus had taken up his abode in Basle in 1521; but, when Basle became wholly Protestant, he moved in 1529 to Freiburg in Breisgau, which was still strongly Roman. Yet it was during a visit to Basle that the end of his labours overtook him. He went there on business in the autumn of 1535, and before the business was completed he became so ill that he was never able to leave. He continued working almost to his death, which took place in the night on July 12, 1536. No priest attended him; but he died saying frequent prayers for mercy and deliverance. In the Protestant city of Basle it might have been difficult to find a priest, even if Erasmus had desired to have one. His monkish enemies, with characteristic ignorance of grammar,

as of the man whom they abused, said that he died *sine crux, sine lux, sine Deus.*

Erasmus was one of those teachers who "outrun their generation in thought, but lag behind it in action." He was a Reformer, until (as a severe critic might say) reform became a thing of deadly earnest. It would perhaps be more just to say that he was a Reformer, until it was evident that the leaders of reform were hurrying on towards extreme measures which Erasmus could not see his way to adopt, and were insisting upon theological distinctions with which he had no sympathy. And we may add, that he seems to have been a little too sensitive about his own intellectual supremacy to be quite whole-hearted in working for the good of mankind. But he did work hard, and he has benefited mankind by his hard work. He had a zeal for truth according to the best knowledge of the day, and he laboured strenuously to make the truth more widely known. Yet he always insisted that the truths which are necessary to salvation are few; and that, although we have a right to make additional beliefs for ourselves, we have no right to enforce them upon others. No man in that generation did more to prepare the way for the movement, which he lacked the moral fibre to lead or to control.

V

THE REFORMATION IN GERMANY: LUTHER

IF Erasmus is the great representative figure of the Renaissance, unquestionably the hero of the Reformation is Luther. Although it is quite true to say that the great reforming convulsion would have taken place if Luther had never lived, yet it is also true to say that it is impossible to understand the Reformation as it actually took place, without understanding the life and character of Luther. The man and the work are so indissolubly united, that we cannot have right judgments about either, without considering the other.

This is not the case with all men who have attempted great things and achieved great results. We can sometimes judge, and judge rightly, of the work, without knowing anything of the man who produced it, as in the case of many of the great poems and great pictures. And we can sometimes judge quite rightly about the man, without taking into account his greatest achievements, as in the

case of many of the great discoverers and inventors. Even with regard to those who took a leading part in the crisis of the Reformation, we can think of them as living at a different period, in quite different surroundings, and yet our estimate of them and of their influence on society would not be very different from what it is now. We can easily think of the gentle, peace-loving Melanchthon living as the friend and helper of Basil or Anselm, of George Herbert or Fénelon, aiding them, in their troubled times, to live in piety and usefulness, as scholars and divines, in all sobriety and honesty. With any of these he would have been much the same man, and would have produced much the same kind of work, as he was and did in his position as the friend and helper of Luther. We feel that we should think of him then, as we think of him now, working earnestly for the well-being and peace of Christendom, sometimes willing to make too great sacrifices for peace, but always yearning to be freed from "the wrath of the theologians."

Again, we can imagine Leo X as living a century earlier or a century later, and being very much what he was in the sixteenth century; evading difficulties with his placable smile, as if nothing in this world were worth worrying about, so long as life (by any means whatever) could be made artistically enjoyable, and the Papacy be maintained without serious diminution of power. His "intel-

lectual sensuality" would have been the same in any age, and Sarpi's sarcastic (is it sarcastic?) estimate of him would in any environment hold good. He was a Pope "absolutely complete, if with these sympathies he had joined some knowledge in things that concern religion, and some more propension unto piety, of both of which he seemed careless." Moreover, we can understand the sixteenth century without Leo X.

But we cannot do the same with Luther. Place Luther in any other age, and he is Luther no longer. Think of the sixteenth century without Luther, and the history of it becomes confusion. The man and his work come before us, not as more or less harmonious elements, but as a unity, and we cannot analyse either without constant reference to the other. And if this is true of the Reformation movement as a whole, it is specially true of the Reformation in Germany. Here Luther is the one great man of his age, and there is no second.

But let us remind ourselves what we mean by this. We have agreed to regard the Reformation as a *religious* movement, although it was several other things—some of them of the highest importance—as well. It is only with this limitation that Luther is the one great man. He is great only in the sphere of religion. He was no great scholar; he never learnt Hebrew, he never quite mastered Greek, and he was himself aware that his Latin was some-

what rough. It is impossible in this respect to place him on a level with Erasmus, or Reuchlin, or his own disciple and younger colleague, Melanchthon. Luther often admitted that he was not equal to Melanchthon in learning: "If the Lord will, Philip will beat many Martins"; but in influence Luther was immeasurably superior.

Although the University of Erfurt,[1] at which Luther took his degree in 1502, had been one of the earliest to welcome the new learning, and although, when he entered the convent of the Augustinian Hermits, he took Plautus and Virgil with him, Luther was no Humanist. During his University career, he avoided the Humanist Lectures; and in the monastery he had very different subjects to occupy his thoughts. He had no sympathy with the culture and art of his age; and during his stay in Rome in 1511, it was not its buildings or its artistic treasures which greatly impressed him. He used often to speak of his humble birth; he said that he was a peasant and the son of peasants. Such origin, followed by the education of a monk, was not likely to result in any great enthusiasm for the Renaissance, at any rate on its non-religious side.

But, in the history of the religious life of the Continent in the first half of the sixteenth century,

[1] It was founded by charter in 1392, being the fifth University in Germany. It was suppressed in 1816.

Luther has the first place. And he never sank to the second place. The closing years of his life were comparatively tranquil, there being no great controversy for which a leader was required. But Luther never became a subordinate in the movement which he had himself started. He was influenced by others, and he was influenced still more by the results of his own actions; and in the end these results carried him much farther than he had originally intended to go. But so long as a controlling mind was needed, he retained the control; and, in spite of his own doctrine, he retained his free will. He never became a mere swimmer, carried along by the flood which he himself let loose.

And we must remember that, in considering the religious movement of which Luther was the leader and the life, we have decided to adopt the religious point of view. In the marvellous success which he won we recognize results which are not adequately explained either by his force and ability, or by his opportunities. "To overturn a system of religious belief, founded on ancient and deep-rooted prejudices, supported by power, and defended with no less art than industry; to establish in its room doctrines of the most contrary genius and tendency; and to accomplish all this, not by external violence or force of arms, are operations which historians, the least prone to credulity, ascribe to Divine Providence. Though none of the Reformers

possessed, or professed to possess, supernatural gifts, yet that wonderful preparation of circumstances which disposed the minds of men for receiving their doctrines, that singular combination of causes which enabled men destitute of power and policy to triumph over those who employed against them extraordinary efforts of both,—may be considered as no slight proof that the same Hand which planted the Christian religion protected the reformed faith, and reared it to an amazing degree of vigour and maturity." [1]

Probably there is no class of writers that deals more habitually in misrepresentation than religious controversialists; and among religious controversialists there is perhaps no one more easy to misrepresent, or more frequently misrepresented by his opponents, than Luther.[2] He was a man of intense convictions, and his convictions were always in a state of development. He went on from strength to strength; but his way of stating one strong position was not always in harmony with his way of stating the other strong positions which had preceded it. His heart burned within him, and he could not keep silence; and when he did speak with tongue or pen he did not stop to weigh his words. What he had got to say in attacking

[1] Robertson, *History of the Reign of Charles V*, ii, pp. 104, 105.

[2] J. B. Mozley, *Essays*, i, pp. 321f, 375f.

what he believed to be false and mischievous, or in teaching what he believed to be Scriptural truth, was blurted out, sometimes in exaggerated or paradoxical statements, from which an adroit opponent can easily extract absurdities and contradictions. And yet there are cases in which a teacher may find paradoxes and inconsistencies to be useful, and even necessary. Some of us have heard Ruskin declare that, in lecturing on Art, he was never satisfied until he had contradicted himself several times: there were so many sides to be considered. In this respect, Luther is as simple, both in mind and method, as the writers of Scripture; and it is not difficult to find inconsistencies in some of them. In both cases we may quote the very words used, and draw a perfectly logical conclusion from them; and yet the conclusion is not what the writer taught, and perhaps our interpretation of the words is not what he meant. No doubt Luther was incautious and vehement, and sometimes flung about strong words very wildly; but an enthusiast is not to be judged by his extreme utterances, any more than the character of a nation is to be inferred from the frenzy of its mobs.

Romanists and others who abominate the substance of Luther's teaching, sometimes dwell upon the violence and coarseness of his language; and it is easy to cite examples. It was a violent and coarse age, and in this matter Luther is not so great

a transgressor, according to our standards, as some of his contemporaries. Moreover, he was not the first to use such weapons. As Erasmus points out in a letter to the Elector of Mainz (November 1, 1519): "Luther has ventured to raise doubts about indulgences, but other people had previously made shameless assertions about them; he has ventured to speak rather strongly about the power of the Pope, but those others had written a great deal too strongly in support of it;" and so forth. His enemies flung fierce words at him, and he flung fierce words back. He could not, he said, go softly, as Melanchthon did. "That I am vehement, is not to be wondered at. If you were in my place, you too would be vehement." He was dealing with evils which did not admit of either gentle remedies or compromise; *Mein Handel ist nicht ein Mittelhandel;* and concessions only encouraged the enemy. In 1530 Luther wrote to Brenz: "My language, untrained in rhetoric, yields a chaos of words, and has constantly to fight with monsters. Of that fourfold spirit of Elijah, I have the wind, the earthquake, and the fire, but to you is allotted the refreshing zephyr. Yet I comfort myself with the thought that the heavenly Father needs an occasional servant who can be hard to the hard, and rude to the rude." Christ and His Apostles had used strong language in dealing with similar evils, and their condemnations are remembered. If one

wants to make an impression one must call things by their right names. As Heine said, "The polish of Erasmus, the benignity of Melanchthon, would never have brought us so far as the divine brutality of Brother Martin." There is no reason to believe that the men of his own generation were often shocked by either his vehemence or his scurrility. Some of the Humanists became disgusted, but most people liked invective, and they felt that in this case it had been provoked and was often just. Twenty or more years after he had written it, Luther says of one of his fiercest attacks, "I have read my book over again, and I wonder how it was that I was so moderate." [1] This to Melanchthon, April 12, 1545. And yet Luther himself could see that in such things one might exceed even the liberal limits allowed by that age. Like Erasmus and Reuchlin, he disapproved of the riotous horseplay which often disfigures the wittiness of the *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum.*

The greatness of Luther is more clearly seen when one compares him with other leaders in the same field on one side or the other. We must defer for the present any comparison between him and Zwingli, or between him and Calvin. Let us look at him once more side by side with Erasmus. Both

[1] McGiffert, *Martin Luther, the Man and his Work,* p. 154. Luther's violent language was mostly in Latin. It is not fair to judge it by literal translations into English.

of them had begun their career with an experience of monastic life, but in very different ways. Erasmus had tried the life, because he could not help himself. Those who had charge of him had made him enter a monastery, and he escaped from it as soon as he could conveniently do so. Luther had adopted the monastic life of his own free will, very deliberately, and against the wishes of his father, who for years could not get over this act of his very promising son.[1] He adopted it in a spirit of earnest self-consecration, believing that it was for him the best means, if not the only means, of saving his soul. And no one reading his account of his experiences in the convent can doubt that he gave the system a full trial. If any one could have been saved by such a system, he would have been, he says. The other friars thought him a saint, on account of his rigorous asceticism in fastings, watchings and frequent devotions, both public and private. That he submitted to the strictest rules, is less than the truth; he welcomed and augmented any strictness that his superiors suggested to him: indeed, his scrupulosity was more exacting than their rigour. And he found it all utterly unsatisfying: he could

[1] See Luther's letter to his father, November 21, 1521. Stories about his having been frightened into taking this step, or having taken it impulsively in a fit of strong emotion are not very credible, although they cannot be disproved and are still believed.

not by any such methods quiet his conscience and obtain peace of mind. This is how he writes about it to George Spanheim, another Augustinian, April 7, 1516, about eighteen months before he nailed up his ninety-five Theses at Wittenberg. "The temptation to rest in one's own works is very strong, especially with those who wish to be good and pious. They are ignorant of God's righteousness, which has been so richly bestowed on us in Christ without money and price, and they try to do good of themselves, till they fancy that they can appear before God adorned with every grace. But they never get thus far. You yourself, when you were with us in Erfurt, suffered from this illusion, or rather delusion; and I also was a martyr to it, and even yet have not overcome it. Therefore, dear brother, learn Christ and Him crucified." [1]

There is no such training for the work of a strenuous reformer in the monastic experiences of Erasmus. His guardians forced him to "renounce the world," and he also entered an Augustinian house. A schoolfellow who was in it described it as an angelic home, with plenty of books and plenty of time for reading them. Erasmus comforted himself that it would be two years before he need take life vows, and he might escape in the meantime. But he

[1] M. A. Currie, *Letters of Martin Luther*, p. 5. This was written about two months after Erasmus published his Greek Testament.

failed, and the vows were taken. The home was anything but angelic. The books were there, but the study of them was discouraged. Erasmus says that he might get drunk openly, without fear of consequences, but he had to read at night in secret. He hints at grievous vices among the friars, and at his yielding to them himself. But instead of the terrible penances by which Luther attempted to conquer temptations and atone for transgressions, Erasmus took refuge in study. He excuses himself with the remark, that "if there had been over him a superior of a truly Christian character, and not one full of Jewish superstition, he might have been brought to yield excellent fruit." The amusing story of his robbing the prior's pear-tree, and causing the blame to be laid on another friar, illustrates the monastic life of Erasmus. He was not being braced by it for higher things. It was some years before he escaped from the convent, and some years more before he was dispensed from his vows. All this is in complete contrast with the monastic experiences of Luther.

It was about five and a half years before the death of Luther that Paul III at last recognized the possible value of the society founded by Ignatius Loyola; and the Company of the Jesuits was formally established September 27, 1540. At that time Loyola had ten disciples; less than seventy years later there were more than ten thousand. Let us

compare Luther with the great leader who from that day onwards devoted his immense energy and enthusiasm to the task of undoing the work of Luther. The conversion of Loyola, after being wounded at Pampluna in 1521, was very different from the conversion of Luther in his convent. In Luther's case, a soul overwhelmed by consciousness of a heavy burden of sin, at last found peace in the conviction of having obtained mercy from God in Christ. In Loyola, it was the old craving for active service finding satisfaction in a new object. Loyola's chivalrous spirit and genius for organization were turned in a new direction. His capacity for seeing the key to a position, and for producing the machinery for defending it, was henceforth devoted to the defence of the Roman Church and of the Papacy, especially against Protestant assailants. If Luther's *Liberty of the Christian Man* contains the essence of the Reformation, the *Spiritual Exercises* of Loyola may be called the engine of the counter-Reformation. Prompt military obedience was the key-note of Loyola's life and system. His *Exercises* were inspired with the idea of military drill. There was no need to examine Luther's teaching. Lutheranism was mutiny against constituted authority. What was to become of the army of the Church, if the rank and file might rebel against their commanders? The three or four weeks of absolute solitude required for the use of

the "*Exercises*" produced what we should now call a hypnotic condition of experiences, the influence of which was to last for life.[1]

Loyola is as clearly the hero of the counter-Reformation as Luther is of the Reformation. Both desired to remedy the evils of the Church, as each understood them, but each wished to retain just those features which were abhorrent to the other. The one was all for submission, as the other was for liberty. The thoroughly German Luther was an enigma and an abomination to so thorough a Spaniard as Loyola; and Loyola remains an enigma to most German Protestants. As a mighty influence in his own and subsequent times, Loyola may be placed side by side with Luther; but as a creative force Luther is far the greater man of the two. It is the difference between originating and organizing, between imparting life and preserving it. But the organization was magnificent, and by means of it the Jesuits often undid the work of Luther, and in his own Germany recaptured much.[2]

Two things which greatly contributed to Luther's

[1] Schiele and Zscharnack, *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Art. "Jesuiten."

[2] W. Walker, *The Reformation*, pp. 368, 369. Macaulay says, with some exaggeration: "Fifty years after the Lutheran separation, Catholicism could scarcely maintain itself on the shores of the Mediterranean. A hundred years after the separation, Protestantism could scarcely maintain itself on the Baltic."

success may be regarded as in a special sense providential, for neither of them was in any way due to his own foresight or ability. One of these was his beginning with very moderate demands, and being gradually, and sometimes unwillingly, led on to demand much more. He himself said in later years that, if he had seen at the outset the position which he at last reached, wild horses would not have dragged him into action. It was the force of circumstances which seemed to compel him to go further and to increase the number and weight of his demands.[1] The other thing which contributed to his success was the fatuous way in which the Pope dealt with him. As Döllinger has said: "Luther had one very powerful ally besides the national sympathy, and that was the Court of Rome itself. Had the Curia been advised by an astute disciple of the German Reformer, he could hardly have given counsel more efficient or more profitable to his master than what was actually followed." [2]

Luther began with a mere protest against the sale of indulgences by disreputable persons. He did not denounce the whole system of indulgences. He never disputed that the Church has power to remit the penalties which it has imposed in the form of penances to be performed in this world. But was there any sufficient authority for the doc-

[1] J. B. Mozley, *Essays*, i, p. 369.
[2] *The Reunion of the Churches*, p. 63.

trine that the Pope could remit penalties which were of the nature of purgatory in the other world? If so, could the Pope authorize any one to sell such remission? This was the question which he claimed to have publicly discussed. The title of the original text of his ninety-five Theses runs thus: *Disputatio pro declaratione virtutis indulgentiarum. Amore et studio elucidandae veritatis haec subscripta disputabuntur Wittenbergae praesidente R. P. Martino Luthero, Artium et S. Theologiae Magistro ejusdemque lectore ordinario.* And he begs those who cannot be present at the discussion to send their dissertations.

In Rome there were five Churches which were supposed to have the privilege that a soul was released from purgatory as soon as a mass was said at one of the privileged altars, or as soon as certain prayers were said there by any pilgrim visiting the Church. Luther says that, when he was in Rome and believed all this, he felt quite sorry that his parents were still alive: it would have been such a joy to free them from purgatory.[1] But there was no need to take the costly and laborious pilgrimage to Rome; all the benefits of it could be enjoyed

[1] Currie, *Letters of Martin Luther*, p. 245. An English poem of the fifteenth century called *The Stations of Rome*, mentions the number of years' release from purgatory to be obtained at the principal shrines. See also the section about the Pardoner in the Prologue to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

by buying an indulgence from one of the friars who were sent round to sell these advantages. Forms of absolution also were sold, which other people besides Luther had declared to be incitements to sin. Indeed, some persons had spoken against them more strongly than Luther did. H. C. Lea [1] has shown that before 1510 there was a wide-spread tendency to deny the efficacy of indulgences. In 1510 Julius II issued the Bull, *Liquet omnibus*, to raise money for the building of St. Peter's, but it seems not to have been published in Germany. People asked why the Pope did not at once set all souls free from the pangs of purgatory without payment. And why did God keep the souls in purgatory until a few pence were paid for each? It was incredible that He wanted these small sums and needed to extort them in this cruel way.

The forms of absolution that have come down to us differ somewhat in wording, but the following is part of one that was used by Tetzel: "By the authority of Christ, by that of His Apostles Peter and Paul, and of the Holy Pope, granted and committed to me in these parts, I do absolve you, first from all ecclesiastical censures in whatever manner they have been incurred, and then from all your sins, transgressions and excesses, how enormous soever

[1] *History of Auricular Confession and Indulgences*, iii, pp. 372, 373, 392, 401. See also Trevelyan, *England in the age of Wycliffe*, pp. 135, 136.

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they may be, even from such as are reserved to the Holy See; and so far as the keys of the Holy Church extend, I remit to you all punishment which you deserve in purgatory on their account; and I restore you to the holy sacraments of the Church, and to that innocence and purity which you received in baptism; so that, when you die, the gates of punishment shall be shut, and the gates of the delights of Paradise opened. And if you shall not die at present, yet this grace shall remain in full force, when hereafter you are at the point of death. In the Name of the Father, etc."

From protesting against the sale of such wares as these, Luther was gradually led on, partly by the fact that he could get nothing done by these protests, and partly by the development of his own views, to reject the whole system of indulgences; to denounce the various abuses connected with auricular confession, penances and pilgrimages; to question the decisions of the School men, the justice of the Canon Law, and the authority of Popes and of Councils; to deny the necessity of an episcopally ordained ministry; and so forth. Respecting pilgrimages he said: "Let any one go on a pilgrimage who feels compelled to go; but let him learn that God can be served at home a thousand times better by giving the money which the journey would have cost to the poor, or to his wife and children, and by bearing his cross in

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patience." His recently discovered Lectures on Romans (1515, 1516) show that he was already keenly alive to many religious abuses. Only gradually did he reach the position that a man can be saved apart from the Pope; and he ended by saying that a man cannot be saved unless he opposes the Pope: "I am persuaded that, unless a man fights with all his power against the laws of the Pope and Bishops, he cannot be saved" (Letter of March, 1521).

With regard to the second thing which, through no clever contrivance of his, was of great help to him, viz., the folly of the Court of Rome, it is evident that Leo X could not make up his mind how to deal with Luther. He fluctuated between contempt and severity, partly because he underestimated the seriousness of the situation, and partly because, in his easy-going way, he trusted to the chapter of accidents. Leo lost several opportunities of giving a favourable turn to the course of events.

After nailing up his Theses, Luther wrote at once to his own diocesan and to the Archbishop of Mainz enclosing copies of them. Tetzel professed to be acting under the Archbishop's authority. Luther assumes that the Archbishop does not know this. "It has gone abroad, Reverend Father, under your name, but doubtless without your knowledge, that this indulgence is the priceless gift of God, whereby the man may be reconciled to God and escape the

fires of purgatory, and that those who buy the indulgences have no need of repentance." Luther was not prepared for the success of his Theses. He says: "I did not relish the fame, for I myself was not aware of what was in the indulgences, and the song was pitched too high for my voice." He regarded the Theses as propositions for discussion; other people regarded them as a direct attack on indulgences. They were translated into German and in a fortnight ran through Germany; which shows how ready men's minds were to have such questions raised. And Luther demanded nothing but discussion. He wrote very submissively to the Pope at the end of May, 1518. He says that, according to the usage of all Universities, he has the right, as Doctor of Theology, to propose theses for discussion, and he cannot retract those which he has published; but he places himself in the Pope's hands, for he has confidence in his justice and love of truth. Leo said that the outbreak was a mere squabble of envious monks. "It is a tipsy German that has written these Theses; he will think differently when he is sober." He summoned Luther to Rome, whence he would never have returned. "I saw," says Luther, "the thunderbolt launched against me. I was the sheep that muddied the wolf's water. Tetzel escaped, and I was to let myself be eaten." The excellent Elector, Frederick the Wise, protected him from this danger, and got Leo to consent to

Luther's appearing before Cardinal Cajetan instead of appearing at Rome.[1] Leo could not afford to lose the Elector's good will, as he hoped to have his help in supporting Francis I as a candidate for the Empire at the next vacancy. Cajetan was then acting as Papal Legate at the Emperor Maximilian's last Diet at Augsburg, and he was instructed to arrest Luther and send him to Rome; but as Luther refused to come without a safe conduct, this project could not be carried out. The interviews between Luther and Cajetan took place at Augsburg in October, 1518. The result may be summed up in the criticisms which each of the parties made on the other when all was over. There had been no discussion of the validity of Luther's arguments. The Legate had simply called upon him to retract and submit, and Luther had said that he could not do so until he was proved to be in error. "This fellow," said Cajetan, "wants fresher eggs than are to be had in the market." Luther wrote to Carlstadt (October 14): "Cajetan has a reputation as a Thomist; but as a theologian and a Christian he is no more capable of judging this

[1] Erasmus, in dedicating his Suetonius to the Elector, wrote to him and said, "It befits your Wisdom, not to allow, under your just government, innocence to be overcome by hypocrisy and malice. What people think of Luther in Rome, I do not know; but I know that here every one who cares for religion reads his writings with the greatest admiration and pleasure."

matter than a donkey is of playing the harp." [1] A few months later, January 12, 1519, the Emperor Maximilian died.

What follows shows that the trick of publishing confidential documents was not unknown in those days. Luther drew up an appeal from the Pope to a Council, which he printed and meant to keep in reserve. But the printer recognized that it was a document of great interest, and he sold it right and left. It was inserted in the *Acta Augustana*. Luther was indignant at the moment, but he soon came to regard the publication as in accordance with God's will. To appeal from the Pope to a Council was a measure much approved by many good Catholics, who were exasperated by the encroachments of the Popes upon their liberties and purses. This feeling was specially strong in Germany and France, and the measure was correspondingly hateful to the Curia. Among the forty-one propositions condemned in the Bull which excommunicated Luther (June 15, 1520), it was stated as proof of his heresy that he had appealed to a Council.

Leo lost another good opportunity when Luther wrote to him (March 3, 1519) after the interviews with Miltitz. Miltitz had been sent by Rome to

[1] On one of the many old houses in Brunswick, Gördelinger Strasse 39, there is a carving which represents a donkey playing on the bagpipes.

deal sharply with him, but became conciliatory when he saw how powerful a following Luther already had.[1] He said that an army of 25,000 men would not suffice to arrest Luther and bring him to Rome. In his letter to the Pope, Luther confessed that he recognized the Roman Church as supreme, and that nothing, save only Jesus Christ, was to be preferred to it. He could not revoke what he had said, for, unless he could show that he had been proved to be in error, revocation would do more harm than good. But he was willing to be silent, *if* his opponents would be silent also. This was a great concession, and Leo might have made good use of it. He might have accepted Luther's willingness to be silent as a sign of submission, and might have appointed a commission of German theologians to consider certain points and report to him. This would have pleased Germans; indeed, it was exactly what the Elector Frederick proposed in his reply to Cajetan's demand that Luther should be arrested as a heretic. But Leo followed Cajetan's fatal line. Luther must be made to retract; which threw German sympathy on to Luther's side. Germans were indignant that one of their leading professors should, without fair trial, be called upon by an Italian Bishop to recant, with the alternative of being killed as a pest, if he refused.

[1] Kidd, *Documents*, pp. 41, 42.

Luther's Disputation with Eck at Leipzig a few months later (June 27 to July 15, 1519) almost exactly coincided with the death of Tetzel, which took place at Pirna in either July or August. His death was probably hastened by vexation at the way in which he was insulted by the populace and deserted by his employers. Luther wrote to comfort him; the fault was not Tetzel's but the Pope's; "the child had another father." In the Disputation at Leipzig both sides had an advantage.[1] Eck gained by showing the similarity between Luther's opinions and those of John Huss. People still remembered the monstrous violence of the Hussites and did not want another Hussite war. Although Luther disgusted some of the Humanists, he delighted his less educated friends, by the vehemence of his language: and he won much sympathy from both, when he pointed out how Eck appealed to the Fathers rather than to Scripture. "The learned doctor only dips into Scripture as deep as the water-spider into water; nay, he seems to fly from it as the devil from the Cross. With all deference to the Fathers, I prefer the authority of Scripture." He also pointed out that his opponents did nothing but cry up "the Church" and cry down "heretics." When they are asked what they mean by "the Church," they say "the Pope," without one word of proof that the

[1] Kidd, pp. 44, 45.

Pope is the Church.[1] How can he be, when Papal Decretals abound in heresies? And there is no heresy in saying that the Pope is not the Church. But the chief importance of the Disputation lies in the fact that it made clear to Luther himself, as well as to others, what his position now was—one of uncompromising opposition to Rome. Before it took place he had written to Spalatin that he did not know whether the Pope was Antichrist himself or his apostle.

Next year (1520) Luther published his three great Reformation treatises; the address *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation* (June[2]), *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (October), and *The Freedom of the Christian Man* (November). These have long been recognized as his primary works, and in them can be found the chief elements in his teaching. The first of these was called his "trumpet-blast." He sent a Latin translation of it to Leo X with a letter in which he expresses respect for Leo personally. "But your See, which is called

[1] In his treatise *De juridica et irrefragabili veritate Romanae ecclesiae Romanique Pontificis*, Silvestro Mazzolini declared that the Pope is not only the Catholic Church, but also *caput orbis, et consequenter orbis totus in virtute*. He can elect and depose the Emperor, and no Emperor has any right to decree anything against the will of the Pope.

[2] Some say August, on the 3rd of which Luther wrote to Voigt; *jam edo librum vulgarem contra Papam de statu ecclesiae emendando*. August may be right for the time of publication.

the Curia Romana, which neither you nor any one else can deny to be more corrupt than any Babylon or Sodom, I utterly abhor. *Facta est e Rom. Ecclesia, quondam omnium sanctissima, spelunca latronum licentiosissima, lupanar omnium impudentissimum, regnum peccati, mortis et inferni.* Why did he address this treatise to the German Nobility? Because in 1520 the nobles were the best representatives of the German nation. The middle and lower classes had less opportunity of forming intelligent opinions, and far less opportunity of giving expression to such opinions as they had formed. Yet, so far as they were capable of judging, the treatise was made accessible to them, for it was written, not in Latin, but in German. Luther was already beginning to shape the German language in thus laying his case before his fellow-countrymen. It was their sympathy that he needed and gained. And the feeling was mutual. The national movement found in him something to rally round, for his cause gave definiteness to German aspirations. The three treatises produced an immense sensation, especially the first.[1]

[1] A. C. McGiffert calls *The Freedom of the Christian Man* "the most beautiful of all his works, and the one which contains the finest statement of his Christian faith. . . . His idea of Christian liberty was the most modern element in his teaching, and did more than anything else to undermine the authority of the Catholic (i.e. Roman) Church" (*Protestant Thought before Kant*, pp. 30, 31).

Luther is commonly regarded as one of the most conservative of Reformers. Unlike Zwingli or Calvin, he has a reverence for the past, and he parts from what has been long established with regret, provided that it is not a long established abuse. In 1528 he wrote: "I condemn no ceremonies but those which are opposed to the Gospel. All others I retain intact. I leave even the images intact, except those which were destroyed by the rioters before my return. We celebrate Mass in the customary vestments and forms, only adding certain German songs, and substituting the vernacular in the words of consecration. I hate nobody worse than the man who upsets harmless ceremonies, and turns liberty into necessity." As late as 1541 he wrote to Chancellor Brück that a layman from Italy or Spain, on seeing the Lutheran Mass, would say that it was a true papal service, very little different from what he had at home. In the administration of Baptism he allowed the custom of putting salt into the infant's mouth to continue, "out of consideration for the weak."

But the address to the German Nobility is a marked exception to this conservatism. In it he seems to go into the conflict with the opposing elements with a light heart, and to be willing to throw cargo and rigging overboard, with scarcely so much as a jury-mast left, to help the ship to sail on over the troubled waters. The existing organiza-

tion of the Church had worked badly, and had produced or admitted many grievous evils; and Luther sacrificed even the most venerable portions of it, without an expression of regret. As Ranke once said to the present writer, Luther would have retained bishops, if he had had them; but he had not got them, and he did without them. The radical character of his proposals does not seem to have shocked many of his supporters, although even such an extremist as Carlstadt thought that he was going too fast, and that his attack on the Papacy was rash. *The Freedom of the Christian Man* is less controversial and more constructive than the two earlier treatises of 1520, and perhaps allayed misgivings. But Luther's earnestness and fervour, his simplicity and common sense, left his readers no time to think about the value of what he sacrificed. As Voltaire said of Beaumarchais: *Sa naïveté m'enchante: je lui pardonne ses imprudences et petulances.*

Before the address was published, Rome had been warned, by one who might have commanded respect, that Luther was a person who ought to be treated with consideration. Frederick "the Wise," Elector of Saxony, a most devout Romanist, wrote to his ambassador at Rome in April, 1520: "Germany is no longer such as it has been; it is full of accomplished men in all sciences. The people exhibit an extraordinary passion for reading the

Scriptures; and if the Court of Rome obstinately persists in rejecting the offer of Luther and in treating the affair with haughtiness, instead of replying to his arguments, she must prepare herself for troubles that will hardly be appeased and for revolutions which will be no less fatal to herself than to others." Chris. Scheurl wrote to Eck: "You are bringing on yourself the hatred of nearly all friends of learning and even modern theologians. I have recently travelled through a number of dioceses, and I everywhere found very many adherents of Martin. The clergy's love for the man is astonishing. They fly to him in flocks, applaud him and bless him."

In addition to the three famous treatises already mentioned, Luther produced in 1520 four other writings of importance. It was perhaps at the suggestion of the friendly Elector that he wrote in August an appeal to the Emperor, *Protestation und Erbieten,* offering to submit his teaching to the test of Scripture and asking for protection against being condemned without trial. At this time he had heard of the Bull of excommunication, but he had probably not seen it. In October, after he had seen a copy of it, he wrote two rejoinders—a popular leaflet, *Von den neuen Eckischen Bullen und Lugen,* and the more considerable and deliberate *Adversus execrabilem Antichristi Bullam.* In both of them he expresses a doubt as to the authenticity of the Bull;

but whoever composed it is Antichrist. The fourth writing is another letter addressed to Leo X, which Miltitz is said to have induced him to write, in spite of the Bull of excommunication. This is Luther's third letter to Leo. Luther's attitude in the three letters has been rather aptly distinguished. In the first, 1518, he was on his face; in the second, 1519, he was on his knees; in the third, 1520, he was standing up face to face with the spiritual ruler of Western Christendom, addressing him as man to man, and sometimes lecturing him almost as master to pupil.[1]

[1] W. H. Carruth, *Auswahl aus Luthers Deutschen Schriften*, p. xxxviii.

VI

LUTHER: THE CRISIS AND THE CONCLUSION

IF Leo X had been free to act as he wished, he would possibly, if only for the sake of peace and quietness, have consented to make some concessions to Luther and his supporters. It would have seemed to him to be worth while to keep Luther from becoming more troublesome, if this could be done by leading him to suppose that some of the things for which he was clamouring would be considered. But the Pope could not act without consulting the Curia, and the conclave would not listen to any proposal other than the fatal policy of condemning Luther unheard. They said that he did not deserve a hearing. It is possible that some of them would have advised otherwise if they had followed their private judgment. But, to quote Voltaire once more, *Quand les hommes s'attroupent leurs oreilles s'allongent;* and this "ship of fools" decreed Luther's immediate excommunication. In his reply to the warning of Frederick the Wise,

Leo X described Luther as "the most wicked and detestable of all heretics—a man who had no other mission than that which he had received from the devil." Yet at the Diet of Worms the Elector Frederick told some of the princes that Luther could certainly have been made a Cardinal, if only he could have been induced to recant.

On June 15, 1520, before the publication of any of his three great treatises, Luther was excommunicated at Rome as the teacher of forty-one heresies, one of which was that he had declared that it was wrong to burn heretics.[1] Wherever the Pope's emissaries could get people to obey them, Luther's writings were publicly burned. He at once showed that two could play at that game, and in December, to the great delight of the undergraduates at Wittenberg,[2] and in the presence of many of the University officials, he publicly burnt the Pope's Bull of excommunication, together with a copy of the Canon Law. *Weil du den Heiligen des Herrn betrübt hast,* he cried, *so verzehre dich das ewige Feuer!*

There had been no similar act since Philip the Fair burnt the Bull of Boniface VIII, *Ausculta, fili,* on January 26, 1302. The sympathy which Luther's act evoked showed how many Germans were in favour of defying the Pope. It was no sudden

[1] Kidd, pp. 74, 75.

[2] In three years, 1517–1520, the number of students had more than doubled, from 232 to 578.

thought hastily acted upon. Luther let his intention be known weeks beforehand, and none of his friends seems to have tried to dissuade him from it. The University did not interfere; far from it. Professors went in procession to the bonfire which had been prepared, and one of them lit it. Luther told Staupitz that he had done the act with trembling and with prayer, but that, when it was done, he was better pleased than with any other deed in his life.

We have seen that Leo X lost opportunities of giving a favourable turn to the crisis. He also committed one or two serious errors in tactics. He did immense harm to his prestige in Germany by supporting Francis I as a candidate for the Empire in 1519. He did further mischief to his own cause by committing the publication of the Bull of excommunication to Eck, and also by sending Aleander as nuncio to treat with the new Emperor, Charles V. Both of them were men of evil repute. Erasmus, who knew Aleander, says that he "lived at Venice as a base Epicurean," and Luther says that he was "insatiably covetous and equally lustful." It was notorious that Eck bore a personal *animus* against Luther, and therefore all that he said on that subject was discounted. The Emperor refused to condemn Luther unheard and he summoned the Diet to meet at Worms in January, 1521.

Luther's well-known declaration, that "he would

have ridden into Worms, even if he had known that as many devils were aiming at him as there were tiles on the roofs," [1] should be remembered in conjunction with two other sayings of a similar kind. When the friendly Elector Frederick advised Luther not to leave his secure retreat on the Wartburg, because Duke George of Saxony, who had presided at the disputation between Luther and Eck, might cause him to be arrested, Luther declared: "If I had as pressing business at Leipzig as I have at Wittenberg, I would ride in *there*, even if it rained Duke Georges for nine days." [2] Again, when a cleric under the name of Neobulus advocated polygamy, Luther said that he knew well how to oppose such teaching, "even if it were to snow nothing but Neobuli and devils a whole year long."

"In the records of human heroism," says Creighton, "Luther's appearance before the Diet of Worms must always rank high. The man is worthy of admiration who, rather than tamper with the integrity of his conscience, commits himself to an unknown future, trusting only to the help of God. Luther had worked out his own principles, and he maintained them in their full extent. He boldly stated that religion was a matter for the individual conscience, taught only by the Scriptures; and

[1] Carruth, *Auswahl aus Luthers Deutschen Schriften*, p. 148.

[2] Currie, pp. 98, 99.

that no human authority could devise any other sanction. He knew that by this avowal he gave himself into the hand of his enemies; that he disappointed the schemes of purely political partizans; but regardless of all else he spoke out the truth that he believed." [1]

Charles V had received a Brief from the Pope to the effect that it was now in his power to show that the unity of the Church was as dear to him as it had been to some of his predecessors. He would be bearing the sword in vain, if he proved to be less willing to use it against heretics than against infidels, for heretics were worse than infidels. An edict had been prepared for carrying the Bull of excommunication into effect, and this edict he was expected to sign and issue.

There were some who thought that a compromise was still possible. Luther might possibly be induced to admit that in some of the strongest passages in the treatise on *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* he had gone too far. Even the fact that he had been already excommunicated did not make concession on the side of Rome an impossibility. He had been condemned unheard, and if, when the case was heard, it was found that Luther did not persist in his most extreme utterances, it would be possible for the Pope to withdraw the sentence of

[1] *History of the Papacy*, vi, p. 176.

excommunication. All these surmises were soon proved to be vain.

At Leipzig, Eck had got Luther to admit that in some things he agreed with John Huss, and that the Council of Constance had done wrongly in condemning Huss. At Worms, Aleander extracted a similar admission. Luther said, "I believe neither the Pope nor the Councils alone, since it is clear that they have often erred and contradicted one another." It was this which made Charles V exclaim that he had heard enough. How could either the Church or the Empire be ruled, if every individual might judge for himself? Luther, already excommunicated by Leo X, left Worms April 26, and in May Aleander induced Charles V to sign the document which placed Luther under the ban of the Empire, i.e. made him an outlaw.

Thus Luther was smitten by both the spiritual and the temporal sword. What was the result? In July the Archbishop of Mainz wrote to the Pope, "Since the Bull of your Holiness, and the Edict of the Emperor, the number of Lutherans has been daily increasing, and now very few laymen are found who honestly and simply favour the clergy. But a great part of the priests side with Luther, and very many are ashamed to stand by the Roman Church, so hateful is the name of the Curia and of the decrees of your Beatitude, which others also follow the Wittenbergers in treating with utter

contempt." [1] The nuncio said that nine-tenths of Germany cried "Long Life to Luther," and the other tenth shouted "Death to the Church." Napoleon said that, if Charles V had sided with Luther, he could have conquered Europe with a united Germany. But Charles V was far more of a Spaniard than a German. It surprises us at first, that all this should have been the result, when both the sword of the Church and the sword of the Empire had aimed their deadliest blows at the head of a peasant-born friar. Leo X can hardly have received the report of the Archbishop of Mainz with his habitual smile; but he was content to leave the matter as it was. Neither he, nor any of his successors, ever realized what the Latin races lost, when the Germanic element was expelled from the Church by the condemnation of Luther.

Luther's own writings were one of the chief causes of his success. They were suited to the people who devoured them; homely, practical, intelligible, and intensely earnest, they electrified those who became acquainted with them. It is said that in 1523 no less than 183 pamphlets and leaflets were published in his name. Many itinerant friars were won over. Augustinians, Franciscans, and even Domini-

[1] Kidd, pp. 87–89. The spread of Luther's views was so rapid that some attributed it to a malignant combination in the stars, which caused a spirit of innovation to prevail everywhere.

cans tramped the country advocating the cause of Luther, directly he had been placed under the ban of the Empire. They were sometimes driven out of the towns in which they had been preaching; but that also helped to spread their views (Acts viii. 1, 4).

Charles V might find that in Holland people were quite ready to burn Luther's writings, especially when they knew that the Emperor was likely to pass within sight of the bonfire. But he knew quite well that burning books was not a very convincing way of answering them; and he knew also that in many parts of Germany Luther's writings were eagerly bought up and studied rather than destroyed. What was notorious throughout Germany, and almost throughout Europe, was the fact that at Worms Luther had not disowned his writings, but had offered to retract anything that he had written, if it were proved by Scripture or reason to be erroneous, and that no one had responded to this challenge. The Bull and the Edict did not make men hold their tongues or lay aside their pens. Many anonymous flysheets issued from the printing-presses in support of the new movement. Ulrich von Hutten put his name to an attack on the nuncio Aleander. Did Aleander really think that, by means of a single trumpery edict, which he had craftily extorted from a young and inexperienced sovereign, he was going to extinguish liberty and religion? As if an

imperial command had any power against the impregnable word of God! *That* would not change; but it was likely enough that in time the Emperor would learn to think differently.

It is an instructive coincidence that the smiting of Luther with the ban of the Church and the ban of the Empire comes just between the death of the painter Raffaelle and the death of Pope Leo X. Raffaelle died on April 6, 1520. Luther was excommunicated in June, 1520, and outlawed in May, 1521. Leo X, the patron of the one and the persecutor of the other, died on December 1, 1521. Raffaelle taught with pencil and brush, as Luther with voice and pen: they were magic teachers, and the spell of both is upon us still. Creighton has reminded us that the great painter was putting the last glowing touches to his glorification of the Papacy, just as the great preacher was beginning to depict, in lurid colours, its pestilential sores.[1] Does that mean that they were in opposite camps, and that Raffaelle was anticipating the work of Loyola? A superficial observer might think so; and yet there was no real antagonism. These two mighty teachers, each in his own way, were showing how to make life worth living. Both pointed out the value of the individual as against the cramping demands of corporations. Raffaelle showed the

[1] *History of the Papacy*, vi, p. 208.

beauty of each man's body and mind, and the freedom which can be won by self-culture. Luther showed the preciousness of each human soul, and the freedom which can be won by trust in the grace of God. To some persons these two methods may seem to be opposed, and it is certainly possible to pursue the one without the other. But it is those that can follow both methods who produce the noblest results and find the deepest peace.

On his way home from Worms, through the wise policy of the excellent Elector Frederick, Luther was violently carried off and lodged in a place of safety; and the captors were expressly charged not to tell the Elector where they had hidden Luther. They took him to the Elector's fortress of the Wartburg; and here he remained, concealed from both friends and foes, for nearly a year, disguised in the dress and name of a young nobleman. The chief fruit of this seclusion, in what he called his "Patmos," was the translation of the New Testament.[1] There were already eighteen German Bibles, but all of them were translations from the Vulgate. Luther's was the first translation from the Greek, made by a master of German. And what happened in Germany happened in England also. The German language and the English language are what they are, because of Luther's and Tyndale's translations. No books

[1] Currie, *Letters of M. Luther*, pp. 94–110, 204, 211, etc. Lea, *History of Indulgences*, iii, p. 391. McGiffert, pp. 221–7.

have had more influence upon literature or the lives of men.

It was the extravagances of the Anabaptists which made Luther return from his Patmos to Wittenberg. The pressing business was caused by the arrival of Zwickau prophets at Wittenberg. They had converted Carlstadt, and their iconoclastic frenzy had caused monstrous destruction, not merely of Church ornaments, but of all decent discipline and ritual.[1] Luther returned on the first Friday in Lent, 1522, and preached daily for a week. Ranke thinks the sermons among the most remarkable that Luther ever delivered, spoken not to excite feeling by denunciation of excesses, but to assuage it by quiet reasoning. There was as great a breach of charity, he said, when things indifferent were forbidden, as when they were enforced. What was at stake was nothing less than the success of the religious movement. If these fanatical extremists got the control of it, the Reformation was doomed.

An interesting instance of thought-reading occurred. In an interview with the prophets, Luther warned them against being deluded by the devil. They said that as a proof of their inspiration they would tell him what he was thinking of at that moment, and Luther agreed to the test. "You

[1] Kidd, *Documents*, pp. 94f.

have a secret inclination towards us," they said. "God rebuke thee, Satan," he exclaimed. He admitted afterwards that he was conscious of some such leaning; but he maintained that it was by the aid of Satan that they had read his thoughts.

The chief part of Luther's work was now accomplished. His most glorious years are those which lie between the nailing up of the ninety-five Theses in 1517, and the outbreak of the Peasants' Revolt in 1524. The excesses of the Anabaptists in 1521 had somewhat reduced the effect of the three great Reformation treatises in 1520: the address *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation; The Babylonian Captivity of the Church;* and *The Freedom of the Christian Man.* The Peasants' War in 1524 and 5 caused still greater discredit to the Lutheran cause. Both of these outbursts seemed to be due to the preaching of Luther, and in a certain sense they were so. He had claimed a holy liberty for Christians; and these men had taken a most unholy licence; which was a very different thing. But it was easy to say to Luther, "See what comes of your teaching!" Then his turning against the peasants, and calling on the princes to put down with a strong hand these destroyers of life and property, seemed to the lower orders the act of a traitor. He had shown that they were oppressed by the exactions of Rome; and, when they rebelled against all exactions, he hounded their oppressors

on to cut them down. The result was a worse state of slavery than that which they had endured before the war. The reproach was not just. He had encouraged the peasants to press their claims, but had charged them to do so with moderation [1] : it was when they took to plundering monasteries and murdering nobles that he turned against them.[2] But there was enough semblance of justice in the reproach to make Luther feel it keenly.[3] No act in Luther's life has been more severely criticized, and it had a bad effect on Luther himself and on his work. It destroyed his confidence in the people and in his own power over them. He ceased to be their champion ; and to many he seemed to have betrayed them. But, much as he lamented the results, Luther never repented of having acted as he did.

It was during the war, on June 13, 1525, that Luther married the nun, Katharine von Bora. Melanchthon was greatly disturbed, but begged

[1] *Ermahnung zum Frieden auf die 12 Artikel der Bauerschaft in Schwaben*, April, 1525.

[2] *Wider die mörderischen und raüberischen Rotten der Bauern*, May, 1525 : " one may kill a rebel as one would kill a mad dog."

[3] Harnack, *The Social Gospel*, pp. 51f. ; Hobhouse, *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 222f. ; McGiffert, pp. 257f., 283. Eberlin of Günnzburg comes out well in this crisis. He was equally fearless in opposing *den grossen Haufen und den grossen Hansen.*

common friends to make the best of it. Even those who approved of the marriage thought that the time was ill chosen. Not only was the Peasants' War raging, but the good Elector Frederick had died only a month before. But Luther did not regret this step any more than his action about the peasants. He had long taught that marriage was better than celibacy, and he said that he ought to prove that he believed his own teaching. The end of all things seemed to be at hand: at any rate his own end might be near; and therefore no time was to be lost. Neither advice nor abuse moved him. Opposition generally made him persistent and pugnacious. He was glad rather than otherwise when his enemies denounced his conduct, and his friends never moved him from what he believed to be his duty. The ex-friar married the ex-nun, and the marriage seems to have been a happy one. In the same fateful year, 1525, Luther finally parted company with Erasmus and the Humanists, in the controversy about free will.

Luther's translation of the New Testament stands first as a means of improving the moral and spiritual condition of the people. We may place next to it the collection of hymns, which he published first in 1524, and in making which he got many people to help him. It quickly became a national possession. But this first collection did not contain the grandest hymn of all, *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott.*

That was not written earlier than 1527, and was first published in 1529, after the famous Protest at the Diet of Spires, April 20, 1529. It may be called the National Anthem of the German Reformation.[1] Luther's third great instrument for the building up of the religious life of his country was his Catechism, both forms of which—the longer and the shorter—were issued in 1529. They still hold their ground as the basis of religious education among German Protestants. From 1531 to 1534, Luther was constantly engaged with others in translating the Old Testament.[2] The whole Bible was published in 1534, and was printed eighty-five times in eleven years. A revision of it was begun in 1539, and the extant text is the result of revisions by various friends.

Although Luther separated himself from Erasmus and the Humanists, yet he knew well the value of education. Already in 1524 he had written to various city councils in Germany, urging them to found public schools and public libraries.[3] "Even if we had no souls, and schools and languages were not needed for God's sake and the Bible's, there would still be reason for founding the best possible

[1] See Carlyle, *Luther's Psalm* in *Miscellanies*, ii, p. 178, ed. 1866.

[2] Among his helpers were Melanchthon, Aurogallus, Johann Förster, and Bernard Ziegler.

[3] *An die Rathherrn alle Städte deutsches Landes.*

schools for both boys and girls, for the world needs capable men and women to conduct its affairs." Ordinary men cannot found schools: princes will not; they are either too fond of pleasure or too afraid of criticism. "Therefore, dear magistrates, the thing remains wholly for you to do." In 1530 he advocated compulsory attendance at school, a remarkable anticipation of modern methods.

It was about the same time (1530) that he advocated compulsory attendance at public worship, in order that the people might be taught the true doctrine. The preaching of Roman doctrine ought to be forbidden. Of course, people must be allowed to believe what seemed to them to be true, but they ought not to be allowed to teach error publicly. People who refused to conform in public to the reformed services ought to go and live elsewhere. Luther never advocated any other penalty for professing Romanism, and he was content to wait for the natural effects of preaching the Christianity of the New Testament. The Gospel which he had re-established would make its own converts, and there would once more be a history of the triumphs of the Christian Church. "Those who will not listen to us can easily and quickly separate from us." The League of Schmalkald, formed in March, 1531, and the Peace of Kadan, June, 1534, showed that these expectations were in way of fulfilment; and the successes spread far beyond the limits of

Germany. Henry VIII supported the League of Schmalkald, and so also did Francis I, although he was persecuting Protestants in France. He wanted the help of the Protestant rulers in Germany in his ceaseless struggle with the Emperor, Charles V; and Charles wanted their help against Francis, against Clement VII, and also against Solyman, who was once more in arms against him. In the end terms were arranged between Charles and the Protestants, and Solyman marched back to Constantinople.

Then, in 1540, came the bigamy of Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, who had joined the Lutherans about 1524 and was one of their chief supporters. Luther defended the bigamy, and so did Melanchthon. Luther had always held that bigamy was better than divorce; and, like Clement VII, he had thought that bigamy might be possible for Henry VIII. But the majority of Lutherans regarded Philip's bigamy as a grievous stain on the cause. It certainly weakened the Protestant position, not merely by causing division among the Reformers, but by involving them in inconsistency. How was it possible to make an effective protest against papal dispensations respecting the prohibited degrees, when the Reformers themselves sanctioned bigamy?

The last six years of Luther's life, 1540 to 1546, are not marked by any great incident, but we know a great deal about them from his *Table Talk* and

his correspondence; and if these do not teach us much more about the great leader and Reformer, they tell us a great deal about the man. Luther is intensely human, and his human characteristics, as revealed in his conversation and in his letters, are all of them of great interest, and some of them are charming. Among these is his keen sense of humour. He is far less witty than Erasmus, but in his raillery there is far more sympathy and feeling, Luther can both poke fun and give hard knocks with the riotous good nature of an Irishman. He was very human also in his occasional fits of despondency, when he fears that he has made grievous mistakes, and even that his whole career may have been a mistake. He has used strong language, and it may have been too strong.[1] He has written a great deal, and he may have written too much. The Bible was being buried under mountains of comment. He could "wish that all his writings were buried nine ells underground, by reason of the evil example they will give." [2] And then there is that pathetic confession of the possibility of radical error. "How often, in the bitterness of my soul,

[1] But he says to Erasmus, "If I, who am easily moved to wrath, have often written too bitingly in the heat of the moment, yet I have only done it to stubborn people" (Currie, p. 123).

[2] J. Tulloch, *Luther and other Leaders of the Reformation*, pp. 91f.

have I pressed myself with the Papist's argument: Art thou the only wise person? Are all others in error? Have they been mistaken all these hundreds of years? What if you yourself are mistaken, and are dragging many souls with you into eternal condemnation?" But most pathetic of all is that conversation with his wife one bright moonlight night. They were walking in the garden together, and Luther exclaimed, "What a brilliant light! but it shines not for us." "Why not for us?" asked Katharine. "Why are we shut out from the Kingdom of Heaven?" "Perhaps because we left our convents," he replied. "Then shall we return to them?" she asked. "No," said Luther, "it is too late for that."

It must have been a grievous disappointment to him that so many of the Humanists grew cold towards him, and that so few of the people took a serious interest in the movement, after the novelty of it had passed away. The Humanists, who could have done so much for him, cared less and less for the man whom they had at first heartily supported, but who was found to have so little interest in letters, and who seemed to be insisting on dogmas almost as fanatically as did the Church of Rome. They did not see that the Reformation, although for a time it withdrew men's attention from most of the subjects which constitute a liberal education, yet did a great deal for education by developing the

intellectual faculties.[1] It took several generations to see the truth of this. The good effects of Luther's translation of the Bible could be perceived somewhat more quickly, but Luther did not live long enough to receive much encouragement from that source. And there were times when he would not have cared to live long enough for any such purpose. "Forty more years of life! I would not purchase Paradise at such cost!"

Luther has been rightly called a German of Germans. He said: "I was born for the good of my dear Germans, and I will never cease to serve them." He thought that the German language was better than all others, and that German people were more honest and true than all others. He worked to found a German Church, furnished with all the means of grace, and capable of producing stronger characters than those which were produced by the Church of Rome. It has been remarked of him that he is the only religious founder that the German nation has ever produced. Count Zinzendorf, the founder of the Moravian brotherhood, might be called a second, but he is a very poor second. Yet he, in his smaller sphere, was a better organizer than Luther was. It is perhaps a mere accident, but Luther's German name was never Grecized,

[1] Hardwick, *History of the Reformation*, pp. 355f., ed. Stubbs.

like Erasmus and Melanchthon, nor Latinized, like Calvin. The fact may help us to remember that the Humanist element, which was so strong in them, was wanting in him.

It is also worth noting that the "Storm and Stress" period of Luther's life lies between the closing of one Roman Council and the opening of another. Leo X dismissed the Lateran Council, with promises of peace and his habitual smile, on March 16, 1517; and seven months later Luther was preparing his protest against the sale of indulgences. "There are not many years in the world's history where two eventful pages come so close together as on March 16 and on October 31, in 1517." [1] The Council of Trent met for the transaction of business on January 7, 1546; and six weeks later Luther died. He preached his last sermon on February 14, and his last words in the pulpit were, "This and much more is to be said about the Gospel; but I am too weak, and we will close here." Four days later he passed away, in the sixty-fourth year of his age, at his native town of Eisleben.

In his combativeness, his humour, his sympathy, and his simplicity, as in his fits of deep dejection, Luther is the most human of all the Reformers. He was neither a great scholar, nor a great philoso-

[1] Döllinger, *The Reunion of the Churches*, p. 60.

pher, nor even a great theologian; the repetitions and want of precision and arrangement in his ninety-five Theses may suffice as evidence of that; but he was a great leader, and a great man. And he was a great religious leader because he was so real. Luther's religion may have been defective or erroneous; but he had one. He was full of it, he lived for it, and it made him what he was.[1] Moreover, it made him what he seemed to be in the eyes of his own generation. He was an amazing phenomenon, a "sign," one of those impressive experiences which to many persons are far more convincing than any reasoning. Thousands who could not follow Luther's logic were carried captive by his character. This man, they felt, knows what he is talking about, and he is the real thing. In short, he had overwhelming religious convictions, and he could communicate them to others. He had a whole cause to champion, and more than half a world to challenge and attempt to defeat. The odds against him were enormous; but he came out of the conflict unhurt and with a large measure of success, because of the intensity of his conviction that he was fighting God's battle, and that, whatever became of the fighter, his cause must win. "I do not doubt," he said, "that, if we are unworthy to bring this work to its conclusion, God will raise

[1] Mozley, *Essays*, p. 374.

up others, worthier than we, who will accomplish it." [1]

Luther's great work was that of freeing men from the horrifying and perplexing thought that, bad as the Roman Church unquestionably was, separation from it meant perdition; for its clergy were supposed to be the sole possessors of the means of salvation. Luther destroyed this crushing conviction in thousands of minds, and substituted for it a belief that it was quite possible to win salvation without having recourse to a corrupt hierarchy. He offered them a Church, or Churches, in which a man could be saved apart from Rome. "The sacraments without the word are not able to do anything, but the word without the sacraments is able. If necessary, one can be saved without the Sacraments, but not without the word." The Gospel by itself suffices, the sacraments show that it is there. To most of those in whom he planted this belief it came as a revelation, and was received with enthusiasm. It is quite true that, while Luther set men free in one direction, he tried to impose bondage in another.[2] But the bondage, even where he succeeded in imposing it, was only temporary, and he had already supplied principles of liberty by means of which the bonds which he imposed were broken.

[1] See his letter, written to cheer Melanchthon, June 27. 1530 (Currie, p. 224).

[2] See Appendix III.

Another delusion which he did much to destroy was the belief that "the religious life," that is, life in a monastery, is a much higher life than life in the world. For centuries men and women had been taught that the surest way of saving one's soul is to enter a convent, and that to go about begging on behalf of one's convent is specially meritorious. Luther said: "What you do in your house is worth as much as if you did it up in heaven for our Lord God." The work of a kitchen-maid may be "a service of God far surpassing the asceticism of all monks and nuns." Luther was never weary of teaching that all lawful modes of life may be consecrated to God, and that the true end of religion is not to save one's own soul, but to do as much good as one can to others.

It is difficult to estimate the service which Luther has done to society, by opening men's minds to the truth that it is not only possible to enter the Kingdom of God without either submitting to Rome or entering a monastery, but that Romanism and monasticism may be hindrances rather than helps towards leading a truly Christian life. This truth Protestantism has never forgotten; indeed, its fundamental principle may be said to be the religious freedom of the individual from the power of any particular Church. "The legally constituted Church can never enforce its own ordinances as ordinances of the Church of Christ. In this conviction Luther

shattered the power of ecclesiastical law over the Church of Christ. Until his time the opposition between the Church of Christ and the legally constituted Church had no existence for the life of Christians." [1]

Luther's influence on religious and political ideas, on literature, on social life, and on the map of Europe, has been enormous, and this influence has been won—largely without effort on his part—through his massive character; through his sincerity, earnestness, unselfishness; and, above all these, through his splendid courage. We may differ widely from some of his opinions, but we live in a world which is a wiser and a better world, because of Luther's work.

[1] Harnack, *The Constitution and Law of the Church*, p. 180.

VII

ZWINGLI AND CALVIN

LUTHER and Zwingli belong to the first age of the Reformation. They are originators. They are the leaders who started the movement sustained it, and to a large extent controlled it. The one founded the Lutheran or more Catholic type, the other the Reformed or more Puritan type, of Protestantism. Calvin, both in time and in development of doctrine, belongs to the next generation. He is the organizer and systematizer of what had already been started by others : but his manner of organizing is so original, and the system which he constructed is so powerful, that it may be doubted whether he has not had as much influence on religious thought in Europe as all the other Reformers put together. Melanchthon in time, though not always in development of thought, comes between the two great leaders and the great organizer ; and to some extent he stands in the same relation to Luther that Calvin does to Zwingli ; i.e., he formulated Luther's ideas as Calvin formulated Zwingli's ideas.

But there is considerable difference between the two cases.

Melanchthon was the personal disciple of Luther, constantly with him and taking counsel with him. Like not a few able disciples of able masters, he greatly influenced his teacher. In some things he was Luther's superior; he was a better scholar and he had read more. Like Keble and Hurrell Froude, they mutually told on one another. Froude used to say that he was Keble's poker, and that Keble was his fire: he stirred Keble to action, while Keble inspired him with enthusiasm. But with Luther and Melanchthon, it was the older man who was eager for action, and the younger one who often suggested consideration and reserve. The teacher had the impulsiveness, the disciple the quietude and the thought.

No such relations existed between Zwingli and Calvin. Calvin was never the personal disciple of Zwingli; and it was impossible for Calvin to influence Zwingli as a Reformer, for before what Calvin calls his "sudden conversion" to Protestantism took place, Zwingli had lost his life in battle. Moreover, although the religion which Calvin systematized was Zwingli's rather than Luther's, yet it is Luther rather than Zwingli that Calvin acknowledges as his master. Of Zwingli he does not speak very respectfully. Indeed, Calvin's was from the first too powerful and independent a mind to receive

great and permanent impressions from others after the one great change from Romanism to Protestantism had been made. The man who could write the *Institutes* before he was twenty-seven, and rewrite the book again and again, with modifications and amplifications, but without any important change of view, was not one who was likely to be much influenced by the conversation or writings of other teachers. He was always adding to his own knowledge, but the new knowledge confirmed rather than modified his views.

If fame is a thing to be desired, it has been a misfortune for Zwingli that he had a Calvin to formulate his teaching. The formulator has eclipsed the original teacher. If there had been no Calvin, Zwingli's place in history would have been larger. As it is, most of us know something, and are generally ready to know more, about Calvin; but to not a few Zwingli is not much more than a name, and such people do not feel strongly moved to make him more. Nevertheless, in the history of the Continental Reformation Zwingli counts for a good deal. His debt to Luther was probably greater than he himself believed it to be. He had read much of Luther before he left Einsiedeln in 1519. But there is no need to doubt his declaration that he had carefully avoided corresponding with Luther, because, he says, "I desired to show to all men the uniformity of the Spirit of God, as manifested in

the fact that we, who are so far apart, are in unison one with the other, yet without collusion." [1] They did not remain in unison, as all the world knows; and it is one of the many sad facts in the history of the Reformation that Luther declared Zwingli's violent death to be a judgment on him for his eucharistic doctrine.

There were differences of training and of aim between them from the first. Zwingli was a Humanist, —so fond of the classics that he did not see how widely different the moral standpoint of the Greek philosophers is from that of Christianity. Luther had none of this, and every student of Greek philosophy must lament the way in which Luther abuses Aristotle, not merely for his metaphysical works, but even for the *Ethics*. Luther hated a philosopher whose moral system was based upon the doctrine that men are free to form habits, and do not lose their freedom until habits are fully formed. He laments that in the Universities "the blind heathen Aristotle reigns. It pains me greatly that the damnable, proud, cunning heathen has led astray so many of the best Christians with his false words." Of all the Reformers, Luther was the most mediaeval, and he never quite shook himself free from scholasticism. Zwingli was much less con-

[1] "Zwingli was jealous of the claim of chronological antecedence made for Luther" (S. M. Jackson, *Huldreich Zwingli*, p. 130).

servative and much more modern. His father placed him in a Dominican monastery for two years for the sake of the educational advantages; but Zwingli would no more have thought of entering a monastery as the best way of saving his soul, than Luther would have thought of doing the like as the best way of securing fine music. Both Reformers were very fond of music, and Zwingli said that convent music sometimes did tempt him to turn monk.

Luther's aims were always religious. He said that he had been called to preach the Gospel as God had brought it home to him, not to mix in politics. Zwingli considered himself to have been called to save the Swiss from misgovernment quite as much as to save their souls. The evils of society, he said, came from selfishness, and the cure for that was to be found in the Word of God. Thus, for somewhat different reasons, both Zwingli and Luther regarded it as their special function to make known the Scriptures; and it was in order to do this more efficiently that Zwingli learnt Greek during the ten years (1506–16) that he was parish priest at Glarus. But it was during the three years that he was at Einsiedeln (1516–19) that the great change in his views took place. It was caused partly by study of Scripture, partly by three visits to Italy as army chaplain, which taught him a good deal about the methods of the Papacy, and partly by the gross

superstitions which were sanctioned at the great pilgrimage church in Einsiedeln. In August, 1518, the Franciscan friar Samson came to Switzerland with the Pope's authority, to sell pardons and indulgences; and it seems to be well established that Zwingli protested against the sale of these wares before Luther did. But he did so for a different reason. Luther enlarged upon the presumption of claiming to sell the forgiveness of God. Zwingli simply pointed out the silliness of the transaction. In this he was like Erasmus, who ridiculed the idea that Purgatory has a duration which can be measured by calendars, and that so many years and months and days can be bought off by indulgences. But neither Erasmus nor Zwingli had Luther's intense sympathy and pity for the victims of these frauds. There were vicious men who thought that by means of indulgences they could cheat the devil and escape the suffering due to their sins. Such people deserved to be cheated themselves. But there were other poor souls who felt the intolerable burden of sin, and who hoped that indulgences would do something towards freeing them. Luther knew from experience that the peace of a quiet conscience was not to be obtained by any such means, and he was too sorry for those whose delusion must bring bitter disappointment, to scoff at them.[1]

[1] In one respect all three of these leaders were alike; they all wrote *fast*. Zwingli says, "I am rough and impa-

But the great difference between Zwingli and Luther was one of doctrine. Neither could accept the other's teaching with regard to the Presence in the Eucharist. To Zwingli this difference appeared to be of less importance than it did to Luther. He thought that Luther's theory was too near to the Roman doctrine which both of them rejected as false, but he was much more tolerant of it than Luther was of Zwingli's theory. Luther said that Zwingli's doctrine was a "devilish" perversion of the Word of God. Like many other zealots, Luther regarded zeal for his own convictions the same thing as zeal for Divine truth; his cause was God's cause.

To the student of history the importance of this difference between the two Reformers lies in this, that it has resulted in a fatal and abiding schism in the ranks of Protestantism. It is simply tragic that, in the controversies which must arise between thoughtful Christians, it is precisely those mysteries about which the human mind can know nothing which have been made reasons for the most disastrous dissensions; such as the single or double Procession of the Holy Spirit, and the manner of Christ's Presence in the Eucharist. It is said that the symbolical interpretation of the eucharistic rite was first suggested to Zwingli by the writings

tient of the time necessary for condensing and polishing." He confesses to rushing his books through the press (Jackson, p. 177).

of Erasmus, and the statement is intrinsically probable. But from Pico della Mirandola [1] he had learned that a good deal of Roman doctrine was open to serious criticism ; and quite early in his life he had received similar teaching from Thomas Wyttenbach, Professor of Theology at Basle. In the Disputation at Berne in January, 1528, Zwingli formulated his position thus : " It cannot be proved from Scripture that the Body and Blood of Christ are substantially and corporeally received in the bread of the Eucharist," [2] and this formula was commonly adopted by the first generation of Swiss Reformers. It is very moderate and wholly negative. It affirms nothing as to what does take place in the Eucharist, or what can be proved from Scripture. It merely states what can *not* be so proved. The miracle of changing the substance of the bread and wine, which the celebrating priest was believed to effect, cannot be proved from Scripture.

It may be doubted whether the common view, that Zwingli regarded the Eucharist as a mere memorial, without any special Presence of Christ, is correct. He held that it was not the repetition of a sacrifice, but the memorial of a sacrifice offered once for all ; and he seems, at any rate in his later

[1] He died (1494) when Zwingli was ten years old ; but Zwingli read his works.

[2] *Essentialiter et corporaliter in pane Eucharistiae percipiatur* (Kidd, p. 460).

days, to have taught a Presence of such a kind that it could be grasped by faith, though not pressed with the teeth. In his *Fidei Ratio*,[1] drawn up some sixteen months before his death, he says, *Credo quod in Sacra Eucharistia verum Christi corpus adsit, fidei contemplatione.* But in Geneva, if not in Zurich, there seems to have been doubt as to what he meant by this, and Calvin, who rejected both the Roman and the Lutheran view, as Zwingli did, yet regarded Zwingli's doctrine as "profane."

The Disputation at Berne in 1528 was between Zwinglians and Romanists; the more famous Conference at Marburg in 1529, was between Zwinglians and Lutherans. The two great leaders of reform, who agreed so heartily about fundamentals, and who owed so much to one another's teaching, here met for the first time. They parted, not only without agreement as to the chief subject in dispute, but to be henceforward opponents rather than allies, although, out of fifteen articles laid before the Conference, they had agreed about all but one. The Conference had been arranged by the Landgrave Philip of Hesse. Luther and Melanchthon went to it unwillingly. Luther wrote to Philip that it would be useless, for "I can expect nothing good from the devil, however fine an appearance he puts on." Zwingli went eagerly, and stole away

[1] Kidd, p. 474.

from Zurich in order to be present. Luther began the colloquy by writing on his table, *Hoc est corpus meum*, as if those words, without interpretation, were decisive. That is too like Dr. Johnson kicking the stone to disprove the idealism of Berkeley. After no agreement had been reached on the fifteenth article, Luther declared that two parties which differed on so fundamental a question could not be regarded as brethren. As to the Zwinglians, "we may treat them with charity, but we cannot regard them as members of Christ."[1] The whole Reformation, as Ranke remarks, was concerned with convictions which admitted of no compromise. To Luther all compromise appeared to be weakness. By refusing it he made a ruin of the mediaeval Church in Germany, and by refusing it he made the first rent in the modern Church. Concessions must come from the other side.

The doctrine which forms one of the strongest links between Zwingli and Calvin is that of Predestination. It was held by Luther also, but with less emphasis. Both Zwingli and Luther denied "the freedom of the will," but on different grounds. Luther denied it in order to safeguard the merit of

[1] See his bitter letter to Jacobus, Provost of Bremen (Jackson, p. 316) and to several others (Currie, pp. 258, 262, 274, 288, 423). "Carlstadt, wholly given over to the demons, rages against us in many little books, full of the poison of death and hell."

God in effecting man's salvation. If man is free to take part in saving his soul, then his salvation is not wholly due to the grace of God. Zwingli agreed with this, but his aim was to safeguard the absolute sovereignty of God. If man is free to act as he pleases, then God has not complete control in His own universe. According to Zwingli, God is the only active Being : all activity is His activity, and what we call human activity takes place in accordance with His absolute and eternal decree : Judas and Cain were as much rejected to eternal misery before the foundation of the world as the Blessed Virgin and the crucified robber were elected to eternal bliss.

This doctrine enables Zwingli to take that more comprehensive view of religion which distinguishes him from Luther, for it can be applied to the heathen as well as to Christians. Aristides and Socrates, Cato and Seneca were righteous by God's free election, not by their own free will, and they are now in heaven, for " no faithful soul has ever existed, from the beginning to the end of the world, whom thou wilt not see yonder in the presence of God."

Zwingli, like Hobbes, sees clearly the conclusion to which his arguments lead, and, like Hobbes, he does not shrink from it. If man has no freedom, and God is the sole cause of human action, then He is the cause of all man's evil conduct, not merely as allowing it, but as compelling it. Men sin, be-

cause God makes them sin. It is God who makes the robber murder the innocent, and the treachery of Judas is just as much God's work as the conversion of St. Paul. In order to evade the conclusion that in that case God is immoral, Zwingli says that God is superior to the moral law which He has imposed upon man. How can we tell what it is right or wrong for God to do? We know what He does, and if He does it, it cannot be wrong for Him. Zwingli comes nearer to the truth when he says that what is law to man is to God His own nature and essence.

This doctrine of Predestination, so terrible in its logical issues and in the practical result of making men reject or abandon Christianity, is commonly associated with the teaching of Calvin. When people talk of Calvinism, they generally mean, or specially include, Predestination. And yet it is quite certain that Calvin did not originate it, but adopted it from Zwingli and Luther.[1] Nevertheless, history has been just in attaching this doctrine specially to the name of Calvin. More than any other teacher, he has caused this doctrine to be, until the present generation, a dominating influence

[1] It is remarkable that the denial of man's freedom to will and to act should have been held so firmly by leaders whose wills were so masterful, and whose actions were so vigorous, as in the case of all three, and especially of Luther and Calvin.

among Protestants. We may reasonably conjecture that, if there had been no Calvin, one of the most blighting beliefs that has ever been supposed to be part of the Christian faith, would either have fallen out of men's minds altogether or would have been confined to very few. Luther does not place it in the foreground of his teaching; and if it had been left where Zwingli left it, it would never have attained such general and lasting approval among Protestants. It was Calvin who secured this for it. He did so largely by his consummate ability, which goes for a great deal. This is nowhere more conspicuous than in the *Institutes*, which Lord Acton pronounces to be "the finest work of Reformation literature." Of the doctrine therein contained, he says: "By the thoroughness and definiteness of system, and its practical adaptibility, Calvinism was the form in which Protestant religion could best be transplanted; and it flourished in places where Lutheranism could obtain no foothold, in the absence of a sufficient prop." [1] Secondly, after Calvin had become supreme in Geneva, he was able to preach to all the world in a way that Zwingli was never able to do at Zurich. Not a few people came to Geneva on purpose to hear Calvin; he had competent lieutenants in almost every country; and some of his numerous writings were very widely

[1] *Lectures*, pp. 131, 136.

read; so that his opportunities of teaching what he believed far exceeded those of Zwingli. Again, in teaching this doctrine, Calvin dwells more upon election than upon reprobation. It is the security of the saved, rather than the doom of the lost, that interests him; and, therefore, those who heard or read him would be attracted by the side which he accentuated, instead of being shocked by that which makes the doctrine so repulsive to us. With regard to the repulsive side, he takes refuge in the ignorance of man. Man is utterly unable to understand, and incompetent to criticize, the will and action of God. He says: "If we cannot assign any reason for His bestowing mercy on His people, but just that it pleases Him, neither can He have any reason for reprobating others but His will." He might have taken as his text for the whole, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him?" Or again, "Who art thou that repliest against God?"

But perhaps the chief reason for Calvin's attaining a success far beyond that which Zwingli attained is the fact that the latter gave Predestination a philosophical basis, while Calvin gave it a theological one. From his conception of the nature of God, which Zwingli believed to be dictated by reason, he inferred that man could not be free, but must be predestined to act as he does act. Calvin professed to pay no attention to human reason,

but to derive this doctrine simply from Scripture. The Word of God was his authority for it. This gave him an enormous advantage. The appeal to Scripture is still very popular, and it was specially so in Calvin's day. Moreover, to those who believe in the inerrancy of Scripture, the appeal seems to be decisive. The appeal to philosophy has neither of these advantages. Not many of us claim to be philosophers, whereas all of us believe that we are theologians. Calvin's constant calling the Bible as a witness has had an immense effect in popularizing the doctrine of Predestination ; and, no doubt, if one may regard all passages of Scripture as equally binding, and if one may pick one's texts and ignore all that tells on the other side, one can prove this doctrine, and a great many others besides.

The first edition of the *Institutes*, written in 1536, when Calvin was only twenty-six, was not Calvin's first work. When he was only twenty-two, he published a commentary on the *De Clementia* of Seneca. It is still admired as showing " a range of reading almost marvellous " in so young a man.[1] But it contains an odd mistake. Calvin confounds the two Senecas, father and son, treating them as one and the same man, and thus makes the author of the *De Clementia* live to be 115. The book conveys no sign that the writer is being influenced by

[1] Williston Walker, *John Calvin*, p. 39.

the Reformers, but it is probable that the influence had already begun, and that by the end of 1532 Calvin was convinced.

In France, as elsewhere, the chief movement in preparation for religious reform was made by the Humanists. This had begun before the reign of Francis I, and he encouraged it.[1] He invited Italian scholars and artists to migrate to France, and Frenchmen visited Italy and came back inspired by the culture of the Renaissance. The scholars who enjoyed his munificence were not ungrateful. They praised him in their writings, calling him the "Father of Letters," a species of compliment which has had permanent effect. Historians have echoed the praises of these gratified Humanists, and have been tender to the shortcomings of Francis I. In this way it has come to pass that Francis I has as large a place in history as his far more important and more capable contemporary, Charles V.

The "Father of the French Reformation" is Jaques le Fèvre (Faber Stapulensis), born in 1455 at Étaples. He studied in Italy and taught in Paris, where he won the admiration of the Humanists. In his commentary on the Pauline Epistles (1512) he predicted a renovation of the Church; and he said to his pupil, Farel, "You will live to see it." He might have added, "and to take a very noisy

[1] Ranke, *Französische Geschichte*, i, pp. 124–126.

part in it." Ranke (p. 163) gives a lively description of Farel's methods.

When Francis I in 1525 came back from his captivity in Madrid, he helped the reform party; and the frequency with which he changed his policy towards the Reformation is one of many illustrations of the way in which politics, in all countries, influenced the course of the movement. After one or two fluctuations, there came, on October 18, 1534, the incident of the Placards against the Mass, and thirty-five Lutherans were burned. A little later, Francis wanted the help of the German Lutheran princes; so he instructed his ambassador in Germany to tell the princes that the persons whom he had put to death were turbulent Anabaptists who had rebelled against civil authority. Calvin was indignant that peaceable reformers should be stigmatized as rebels, and he at once published the *Institutes*, with a dedication to Francis I.[1] In this he says that his object in addressing the king is "to vindicate from insulting accusation his brethren, whose deaths are precious in God's sight," and to let him know the real tenets of the men who are being so monstrously maltreated. He hopes that "some sorrow and anxiety may move foreign peoples, for the same sufferings threaten many." This prefatory letter to the king is dated August 23, 1535. It is called

[1] Kidd, pp. 528–532.

"a masterpiece of apologetic literature." [1] Cardinal Newman used to date the birth of the Oxford movement from Keble's Assize Sermon on National Apostasy, July 14, 1833. If we want a definite date for the birth of Calvinism, we may take the dedicatory Preface to the first edition of the *Institutes*, August 23, 1535. The work which it dedicates to Francis is the outline of the Calvinistic system, a system of iron, cast, like the author of it, all in one mould, admitting of no flexibility, and receiving no subsequent modification.

[1] *Enc. Brit.*, 11th ed., art. "Calvin," p. 72.

VIII

CALVIN IN FRANCE AND SWITZERLAND: SERVETUS

IT is said that three representative individuals chanced, for a short period, to be in Paris at the same time—Rabelais, Calvin and Ignatius Loyola.[1] May we think of them as candidates for the patronage of France? And if we had been there with them, could we have guessed which of the three R's France would adopt, the Renaissance, or the Reformation, or Rome?

One might have supposed that the Gallican independence of the French Church, and the traditional jealousy respecting papal encroachments upon the rights of French kings, would have made France a hopeful field for the work of reform; all the more so, because early in his reign (1516) Francis I had concluded a Concordat with Leo X, by which the

[1] Fisher, *The Reformation*, pp. 248, 249, Calvin and Loyola lived in Paris from 1529 to 1532. It is difficult to make out that Rabelais was there also. His patron, Jean du Bellay, became Bishop of Paris in 1533.

King got the right to nominate to the higher ecclesiastical posts, both episcopal and monastic, in the realm.[1] And when reform came in the shape of Calvinism, one might have expected that it would be specially attractive to Frenchmen.

Calvinism, in some respects, is thoroughly French. It is the product of a Frenchman ; and its lucid and logical system is just what a very able Frenchman would be likely to produce, and ordinary French people to appreciate. Lutheranism had no such recommendations. The mere fact that it was made in Germany was enough to make it unacceptable in France. Some cultivated Frenchmen read Luther and were influenced by him. But to the majority he was unacceptable. Although he was indifferent to politics, he was a German of Germans, and could not help showing his sympathies with Saxony and the Empire—powers that were generally antagonistic to France. Not until the Reformation movement came in the form of Calvinism did it make much progress among the French. Calvinism is, as French revolutions are apt to be, a radical break

[1] But this latter fact told more against reform than for it; for by the Concordat France was freed from a good many of the papal exactions and interferences which harassed other countries, and therefore there hardly existed in France that intense exasperation against the Roman Court which was such a help to Luther among almost all classes in Germany. Ranke, *Französische Geschichte*, i, pp. 101, 102.

with the past. There is a great deal of conservatism in Lutheranism, a desire to preserve, when destruction is not absolutely necessary. But Calvin seems to have had little sentiment about old traditions or a long past. With him the past was not specially venerable; and whatever could not justify itself as being sanctioned by Scripture, or at least strongly commended by reason, was surrendered without a pang. We have something analogous to this in the modern French temper, which, after a sharp political crisis, destroys national monuments, changes the names of streets and bridges, and strikes the name of God out of all official text-books.

But there were other elements in Calvinism which were the reverse of attractive to the French character and which more than counteracted its specially French features with the large majority of French people. Two of these told against its obtaining any wide reception amongst persons of culture, and one told against its reception by the nation in general.

Its leading doctrine of Predestination was abhorrent to most of the educated, or indeed, to any one who had clear ideas of justice. Was it credible that God would condemn man to everlasting torment for committing deeds which He had decreed from all eternity that they should commit?

Again, the failure of Calvinism to attain, either on its religious or its philosophical side, to anything

approaching to liberty of thought or toleration of differences, was highly distasteful to those who were inclined to look upon all creeds as only tentative, and more or less open to question. And there were many such persons in France.

Above all, the sternness of the Calvinistic system, and its severity, not only to vice, but to many innocent pleasures which may lead to vice, made it thoroughly unwelcome to the large majority of so gay a nation as the French. It is curious to speculate what might have been the result, if the genial Luther had been born and bred in France. Being German, he was impossible there.

Was, then, the only alternative to the rigidity of Calvinism, the more picturesque, but hardly more elevating, rigidity of Rome? Was Loyola to secure those whom Calvin failed to attract, so that Spanish Papalism, with its demand for unreasoning obedience to existing authority, was to decide doctrine and ritual for a Church which had just parted with the Pragmatic Sanction?

There were probably not a few Frenchmen in that age, including many of the more thoughtful as well as the most thoughtless, who would have said to these two rivals, "A plague o' both your houses."[1] The liberal-minded followers of the Renaissance did not see why they should sacrifice either their freedom

[1] *Romeo and Juliet*, act iii, sc. 1.

of life to Calvin or their freedom of thought to Rome. It was more in accordance with good taste and sound sense to have a good laugh over all things in heaven and earth with Rabelais, whose *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua* seemed to be far more in touch with human life than either the *Institutes* of Calvin or the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius Loyola.

The important question for Frenchmen was, What will Francis I do? We are in the age in which the sovereign settled religious questions for his subjects when he had settled them for himself. Francis seems to have temporized and to have tried to keep on fairly good terms with all parties. He had little to gain by becoming a fanatical Romanist of the Loyola type; and he had still less to gain by declaring himself to be a Protestant. But he had everything to gain by maintaining his independence, and this, as we have seen, he tried to do by favouring first one side and then the other. The oscillating policy was not a success. France became the battlefield of sects and of nations, and the dynasty of Francis "perished in blood and mire." So far as Protestantism has found a home in France, it has been the Protestantism of France's own son, Calvin. One wonders whether Erasmus would not have been more successful. Frances I invited him to come and lecture at his newly established College of the Three Languages; but Erasmus could not be

induced to accept. The invitation to France was first made in 1516 through Budaeus, and was renewed several times. Probably Erasmus did not wish to be tied, and perhaps he thought that in Paris he would be much less safe than in the Empire. He went so far as to consult Tunstal, who had been in Paris, and was afterward Bishop of Durham. Tunstal advised him not to risk it. When the College for the study of the Three Languages was founded in 1530, Erasmus could not be tempted to come and adorn it, and it is perhaps not very profitable to speculate what would have happened if he had come.

It was in the year in which Erasmus died (1536) that Calvin resolved to quit France and settle in the Empire. The war between Francis I and Charles V caused him to go to Geneva, where he was caught by Farel, who with almost frenzied vehemence declared that God required him to remain at Geneva and help the work of reform.[1] In vain Calvin pleaded that he needed leisure for private study at Strasburg. Equally in vain Farel pleaded the needs of Geneva. At last Farel descended to terrible adjurations, and declared that God would curse Calvin's leisure, if he refused to help in time of need. God had stretched out His hand to stay him. Calvin was frightened, and was con-

[1] Kidd, p. 544; Ranke, i., p. 169.

vinced that this really was a divine call. He was now twenty-seven, and he and Farel worked with such energy to enforce strict discipline in Geneva, that two years later they were banished.[1]

In 1540 Calvin went to the Diets at Hagenau and Worms, and in 1541 to the far more important Diet at Ratisbon, which was presided over by the Emperor Charles himself. Here Calvin formed a very close friendship with Melanchthon. It was during this period of banishment that a French translation of the Bible appeared at Geneva. It bore Calvin's name, but like Jerome's Vulgate, it was only a revision of a previously made translation. Calvin had revised Olivetan's French version. Its publication may have helped to restore him to favour at Geneva. He was recalled, and on September 13, 1541, he returned, not at all eagerly, but believing once more that the hand of God was upon him. Beza says that he was received with the greatest congratulations of all the people, and recent historians speak of immense enthusiasm. But there

[1] One of the burning questions which led to their expulsion was that of the adornment of brides at weddings. There was a fashionable manner of plaiting the hair which the preachers regarded as a violation of 1 Peter iii. 3, and would not allow, and this caused great irritation. Dancing and card-playing were forbidden, and a limit was put on the amount that might be spent on a dress or a meal. The immediate cause of their expulsion was their refusing to administer the Eucharist to the disobedient.

seems to have been no public demonstration.[1] He presented himself to the Little Council and began work again that very day. His banishment, during which he had married,[2] was treated as a mere interlude. So far as was possible, he went on where he had left off three years before. But he had now to work single-handed, for Farel had found a sphere for his energy elsewhere.

Calvin's labours in Geneva from his return till the time of his death—nearly twenty-three years—were enormous. It was reckoned that every year he delivered nearly 200 lectures, and preached nearly 300 sermons. He took a leading part in the government of Geneva, the severity of which may be judged from the fact that, in a city of about 16,000 inhabitants, there were in six years (1542–1548) fifty-eight executions and seventy-six banishments, chiefly for offences against religion. In addition to this, he had constantly to be attending meetings and writing replies to criticisms. He was also producing the commentaries which are still read by many, and was carrying on a large correspondence with persons in various parts of Europe, especially with the Protestants in France. His health was not strong, and, like Erasmus, he suffered in

[1] Williston Walker, *Calvin*, p. 262.

[2] The lady was Idelette van Buren, widow of a man whom Calvin had won over from the Anabaptists. She was a devoted wife, but she died in 1549.

his later years from gout and stone. He often lay down on a couch and dictated his commentaries and his letters. When he could no longer walk, he was carried to the pulpit. He allowed himself fifteen to thirty minutes exercise in the day, and this he commonly took walking about the room. No wonder that he suffered from indigestion! He says that he was usually too busy even to look out of window, and he writes to a friend that he has almost forgotten what the sun is like. Many of us know how beautiful the surroundings of Geneva are, with its lake, and its mountains, and the amazing blue of the Rhone. It is the glaciers that best represent him. Their permanence and strength inspires awe; but in their rocky beds no roses bloom. It is said that in all the sixty volumes of his works there is not a single reference to any of these glories. "No vestige of poetical feeling, no touch of descriptive colour, ever rewards the patient reader" of his letters.[1] The varied responsiveness to the feelings of others and the conscious sympathy with nature, which often brighten the letters of Luther, are absent from the severe correspondence of Calvin. In such ceaseless pressure of work, he can hardly have had time to feel anything beyond the ceaseless impression that it was an evil world, and that he was called by God to reform it. Like the Pope in

[1] Tulloch, *Luther and other Leaders of the Reformation*, pp. 241, 2.

Browning's *The Ring and the Book*, Calvin lived in the mental attitude of being—

"Heartsick at having all his world to blame."

Calvin is a conspicuous example of the clear-headed, confident man, who insists upon being heard, because he is quite sure that what he has to say is both true and important. Luther, perhaps, was equally confident, at any rate as regards opposition to Rome, but he did admit that he had made mistakes. And in their opposition to Rome they were not influenced by the same motives. Luther saw in Rome a system which cheated man of his salvation. Calvin saw in it a system which cheated God of His honour. Both of them protested that they were teaching no new doctrines, but reviving old ones; but Calvin held that a new system was required, intelligible, lucid, and consistent. Rome's strength lay in its skilfully compacted system; and without system it could not be vanquished. Unlike Melanchthon and Luther, Calvin was troubled by no doubts. He was quite sure that in his *Institutes* he had taken the right ground and had mapped it out clearly: "He who makes himself master of the method which I have pursued will surely understand what he should seek for in Scripture"; which implies that what Calvin sought for in Scripture he was always able to find there; and this is no uncommon experience. Calvin is "the greatest Biblical dog-

matist of his age" ;[1] and it is through his apparently Biblical system that he has had such wide and prolonged effect, especially in Switzerland, Holland and Scotland. His *ordonnances ecclésiastiques* have had enormous influence wherever the reformed doctrines have spread. During the lifetime of each, Luther was a more powerful force in Europe than Calvin ; but in the history of subsequent thought and action, Calvin has had far the greater influence. Calvin's is a system which requires as complete a sacrifice of the intellect, and as much subservience of the will, as that of Rome ; and both systems still find millions of adherents who are willing to render both of these. But such submission is not likely to continue in an atmosphere of increasing thought and enlightenment ; and in both communions the submission has been seriously diminished of late years. There are beliefs which, as knowledge is increased, cannot be maintained, and there are rules to which men who can think for themselves will not continue to submit.

Calvin was one of those numerous persons who have a very large circle of acquaintances, but very few friends ; and it has been said, perhaps with truth, that all his expressions of affection and sympathy are calm and measured, and that it is only when he is angry that he lets himself go. As Ranke

[1] Tulloch, p. 254 ; see also Hobhouse, *Bampton Lectures*, p. 228.

says, his controversial writings belong to the most vehement that have ever been produced. On the other side may be set his close friendship with Melanchthon, a Reformer from whom he differed seriously on a variety of points. It is unfortunate that Luther and Calvin never met. But here again, Calvin could speak generously of a rival leader, with whom he by no means always agreed. During Calvin's banishment from Geneva, Cardinal Sadoleto sent him an urgent appeal to submit to the Roman Church, describing how differently a Catholic and a Protestant would answer before God at the Day of Judgment. Calvin's reply is considered the most brilliant popular defence of the Reformation which the whole period produced.[1] Calvin was delighted to hear that Luther had read this and other writings of his "with singular satisfaction"; and he said that he should always revere Luther, even if Luther called him a devil.[2] It is not improbable that the reply to Sadoleto was one of the things which helped to bring about Calvin's return to Geneva.

Among Calvin's many supporters in Geneva were numerous French Protestants who had fled from France to escape persecution, and had been attracted by the fame of the great French teacher to settle near him. They became naturalized as citizens, and some of them became members of the Council, and

[1] Kidd, pp. 584–586.
[2] Fisher, *The Reformation*, p. 214.

were of the greatest service to Calvin in his struggle with those who fought against his despotism.

Among the more important controversies in which he was engaged were those with the Romanist, Albert Pighius, in 1543, and with Jerome Bolsec, a Carmelite who had abjured Romanism, in 1551, on the question of Predestination. Pighius began the controversy, and Calvin replied with characteristic vehemence and learning, and in the end converted Pighius to the view that man is not free. The Romanist's appeal to the Fathers gave Calvin an advantage in the use that could be made of Augustine. Bolsec attacked Calvin in church after a sermon preached by the latter, and the dispute between them became so hot that the police had to interfere. In the end, Bolsec had to leave Geneva, but he had powerful supporters, both Bullinger and Melanchthon contending against Calvin's predestinarian views. Between these two controversies there was one with Castellio or Castalio (Sebastian Chasteillon, 1515–1563) in 1544 on the inspiration of the Song of Songs and on the Descent into Hell. Castellio dedicated to Edward VI in 1551 a translation of the Bible into elegant Latin. It has been called "the Bible of the Humanists."

But far more important and far more famous than any of these was the disastrous controversy with Servetus. Its tragic finale has caused it to be ranked with Luther's posting of his ninety-five

Theses at Wittenberg in 1517, and with the flight of the Emperor Charles V from Innsbruck before that perplexing person, Maurice, Elector of Saxony, in 1552, among the greatest events of the sixteenth century.

Miguel Serveto, better known as Servetus, was about the same age as Calvin. He was born in Spain, but he practised medicine in France, and he is said to have anticipated Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood.[1] When about twenty or twenty-one, he had published in 1531 his *De Trinitatis Erroribus*, a book which was Unitarian in tone, and which perhaps in these days would be considered as "Modernist," and as belonging to the "New Theology." In consequence of this he lived in France under the name of Villeneuve, in order to conceal his identity with one whom both Romanists and Protestants regarded as a blasphemous heretic. While practising as a doctor at Vienne, between 1540 and 1546, he wrote a book which he called *Christianismi Restitutio*, and which was still more radical as a denial of Nicene Trini-

[1] "The passage on pulmonary circulation, first noticed by W. Wotton (1694), has given rise to a literature of its own; see especially Tollin, *Die Entdeckung des Blutkreislaufs* (1876), *Kritische Bemerkungen über Harvey und seine Vorgänger* (1882); Huxley, *Fortnightly Review* (Feb., 1878). The best study of Servetus as a theologian is Tollin, *Lehrsystem M. Servets* (3 vols., 1876–1878)."—A. Gordon in *Enc. Brit.*

tarian doctrine than his earlier work : [1] during the time of its composition he corresponded with Calvin, whom he exasperated by incisive criticisms of the *Institutes*. He was so unwise as to send to Calvin part of the MS. of the *Christianismi Restitutio*, and Calvin did not return it. In February, 1546, Calvin wrote to Farel that, if Servetus carried out his intention of visiting Geneva, he would do his best to prevent him from leaving the place alive.[2]

In 1553 a copy of the *Restitutio*, which had been privately printed, reached Calvin at Geneva ; and now comes a dark page in the story. Evidence, obtained from Calvin, and fatal to Servetus, reached the Inquisition at Vienne, whence Servetus fled. He was condemned on June 17 to death by slow fire, but his judges had to be content with roasting him in effigy. It is not certain whether Calvin knowingly denounced Servetus to the Roman Inquisition, or whether he allowed people to see the evidence without knowing what use would be made of it. He seems to have supplied specimens of the handwriting of Servetus, with a view to proving authorship. Servetus was foolish enough to come to Geneva, although he knew that he was in danger,

[1] Dorner (*The Person of Christ*, Div. II, vol. ii, pp. 161–168) gives a summary of the theology of Servetus.

[2] *Si venerit modo valeat mea auctoritas, vivum exire nunquam patiar.* Calvin wrote to the same effect to Pierre Viret. Kidd, pp. 646, 647.

for he came incognito. On August 13 he went to hear Calvin preach. He was recognized, and at Calvin's suggestion was arrested and imprisoned. On the 20th Calvin wrote to Farel: "I hope that the judgment will be sentence of death, whatever happens; but I desire that cruelty of punishment be withheld." At the trial Calvin acted as prosecutor and had no trouble in causing Servetus to incriminate himself hopelessly. Servetus vied with him in aggravating the case against himself. With deep sincerity he admitted, as Luther had done at Worms respecting his writings, that the book was his, and he declared that he had written it under a sense of duty. Then he used insulting language against Calvin, calling him a liar, fool, madman, scoundrel, and so forth. He demanded Calvin's arrest and banishment, and said that Calvin's goods ought to be transferred to *him*. In this bravado he was relying upon the power of Calvin's enemies in Geneva, of whom there were many. It is one of the many painful features in the case that it was distinctly to Calvin's interest to get Servetus condemned, for such a triumph would greatly strengthen his position in Geneva. The case dragged on, and, as in the case of Bolsec, there was much correspondence with other authorities, both ecclesiastical and civil, in Switzerland. In the end it seemed to be clear that Calvin's enemies had failed, and that Protestant feeling was in favour of removing such a pest as

Servetus from the earth. On October 26 he was sentenced to be burned alive the next day. Calvin asked for a milder form of death, but his request was refused. Through the clumsiness of the executioner the agonies of Servetus were prolonged. His last cry was: "Jesus, Thou Son of the Eternal God, have pity on me," and it has been noticed that "eternal" is the epithet, not of the Son, but of God. The book for which Servetus was condemned was tied to his neck to be burned with him. It fell off, and was rescued from the flames. It may still be seen, "a ghastly memorial of Reformation ethics," in the National Library at Paris.

We have always to remember that in putting Servetus to death, neither Calvin nor the Council nor the Swiss Governments whom they consulted had any jurisdiction whatever. Their action was lynch law of the most revolting kind. Castellio, Calvin's old opponent, drew up a collection of opinions against the use of force in religion. The book was published under the title of *De non puniendis gladio haereticis.* There were several contributors, who adopted the name of "Martinus Bellius." He says: "I have long been seeking to find out what a heretic is: he is a man that thinks otherwise than we do respecting religion"; and it is urged that "Christ would be a Moloch, if he required that men should be offered and burned alive." But Calvin had the support of the large majority of Swiss Protestants and of many

outside Switzerland. Even Melanchthon said that the hideous deed was justly done.[1] There is truth in Coleridge's hyperbole that "all European Christendom" must share with Calvin the opprobrium of this crime.

History has treated the burning of Servetus as one of the great horrors of the Reformation; and a horror it certainly is: all the more so because those who perpetrated it had to claim freedom of thought in order to justify their own position. Calvin was constantly protesting against the persecution of his co-religionists in France. But history is sometimes capricious. One striking event stands out and is remarked and discussed by every one. Other events of the same character are recorded and are at once almost forgotten. Hundreds of Anabaptists had suffered in the same manner as Servetus by a variety of cruel deaths, and nobody cared. Luther approved of their being beheaded in Saxony, and said that their courage showed that they were possessed by the devil. Nobody cared then, and hardly anybody cares now. Some of us remember the extravagances of the Anabaptists and

[1] In October, 1554, he wrote to Calvin: *Affirmo etiam vestros magistratus juste fecisse quod hominem blasphemum, re ordine judicata, interfecerunt.* Chamfort, the wit of the French Republic, asked how many fools it takes to make a public. When we find Melanchthon, Calvin and Beza defending the burning of heretics, we ask how many wise men it takes to make a fool.

the hideous things which the maddest of them perpetrated. But we do not so often remember that the Anabaptists had their martyrs, who suffered horrible tortures, and faced cruel deaths as bravely as Servetus did, simply and solely because they would not be false to their religious convictions. A man may be deluded in being convinced that he is inspired; but one respects him for refusing to be terrified into saying that he is not inspired while he feels sure that he is. "The doctrine of the Anabaptists," says Döllinger, "which emanated from the lowest ranks, was zealously attacked by the whole body of theologians. But many laid down their lives for this form of belief; and if the princes had not hastily combined to drown the movement, which was not only religious, but political and social, in the blood of its adherents, Germany would probably have been divided, not, as afterwards happened, between Lutherans and Zwinglians, but between Anabaptists and Lutherans." Some of the Anabaptists did abandon their strange profession of faith, either through genuine conversion or through fear. It is remarkable that none of them returned to Protestantism. They joined, or rejoined, the Roman Church, and were among the forces which augmented the strength of the Counter-Reformation. It is instructive to reflect upon Anabaptists and Jesuits amalgamating to check the successes of Lutherans and Calvinists,

Combinations hardly less strange may be found among ourselves at the present day.

Calvin lived a little more than ten years after the burning of Servetus, and they were years of continual controversy;—with those who shared the opinions of Servetus and were at last driven out of Geneva; with the Lutherans on the doctrine of the Presence in the Lord's Supper; and with many of the citizens, both official and unofficial, of Geneva, about various questions of government. On February 6, 1564, he preached his last sermon, having scarcely breath to deliver it. On May 2 he wrote his last letter—to Farel. On May 27, about 8 p.m., he died, not quite fifty-five years of age.[1] We admire his immense industry and ability, his skill in organizing men and in systematizing the products of men's minds; above all, we admire what the Genevan Council called the "majesty" of his character. But we are sure that the truth which makes us free cannot be confined within the barriers which Calvin attempted to place round it, and that God has other ways than those of Calvin for drawing and governing men.

[1] Kidd, pp. 649–651.

IX

CONCLUSION

THE Reformation was still running its course when men began to ask what were the moral effects of it, and that question has been constantly discussed down to our own day. From the nature of the case, nothing better than a very tentative answer can be given to the question. Even with regard to our own times, respecting which we have elaborate statistics of many kinds, it is impossible to decide, with regard to a given decade or even half century, whether public morality has improved or deteriorated ; and how can we form trustworthy conclusions with regard to a period respecting which we have no statistics whatever ? With regard to our own times we can prove that in one district, convictions for serious crimes have greatly increased, and that in another they have greatly diminished. That may mean no more than that the police have become more efficient in the one case and less efficient in the other ; or that exceptional incentives to crime have been present in the one locality and have been

absent in the other. Again, we may be able to show that attendance at public worship has seriously fallen off. That need not mean that people are ceasing to be religious, but only that the services have features which many people dislike, or lack qualities which many people desire. And so on, all the way round. Even with well ascertained facts, it is by no means always easy to ascertain the causes of them, or to be certain whether, on the whole, men are growing worse or better. But, with regard to the sixteenth century, it is impossible to obtain a sufficient amount of trustworthy evidence. Nevertheless, there is a good deal of evidence which has been collected from a variety of sources. It is not of a scientific kind, and it is not given in statistical form, but it consists largely of personal impressions respecting the social conditions of the time. These impressions may easily be exaggerations of the truth, and in some cases may be erroneous. But the conclusion which seems to follow from a consideration of such evidence as is at our disposal, is that the *immediate* moral consequences of the Reformation were, on the whole, bad.

Protestants cannot comfort themselves with the reflection that most of the evidence comes from Romanist writers, who were interested in showing that the teaching of the Reformers was productive of much immorality. A great deal of evidence comes from the Reformers themselves and from

their followers. Döllinger, in his History of the Reformation,[1] has collected a large amount of material from contemporary Protestant writers, giving a very gloomy picture of the condition of the Reformed Churches. It is true that this work was written just at the middle of Döllinger's long life, at a time when the marvellous development in completeness and justness of view, which vast increase of knowledge produced in the second half of it, had scarcely begun. It is also true that about twenty-five years later he spoke of it to the present writer as "a one-sided book," produced for the purpose of making out a case against Lutheran teaching, and that in his later years he spoke and wrote very differently of the Reformers, especially of Luther and Melanchthon. Nevertheless, quotations from the Protestant writers of that time hold good as evidence, whatever the original motive for collecting them may have been, and they give a very dark picture of the condition of Lutheran congregations, especially with regard to sexual morality. It is quite certain that the bad report of the social condition of the people in districts in which the Reformation had prevailed is not entirely due to Roman misrepresentation. We may, if we like, distrust the evidence of men who, like Erasmus,

[1] *Die Reformation, ihre innere Entwickelung und ihre Wirkungen im Umfange des Lutherischen Bekenntnisses.* Regensburg, 1845.

although they agreed to a large extent with Luther, yet never separated from Rome in order to join him. We may also distrust that of those who, after having joined him with enthusiasm for a time, returned to the Roman Church, such as Georg Witzel, Johann Haner, Crotus Rubeanus, Theobald Villikanus, Wilibald Pirkheimer, and others. But in their case, however prejudiced their evidence may be, there remains the fact that the results of Luther's teaching seemed to them so unsatisfactory, that they left him and returned to Rome. It is when we come to those who joined the movement, and continued to work with Luther and other Reformers in spite of discouraging facts, that we have evidence which cannot easily be discounted or explained away. That of Johann Eberlin of Günzburg (see p. 31) is specially weighty as coming from a convinced convert to Luther's teaching, who had left the Franciscans and married, and yet was so temperate in his language against the Pope and the monks, that he was looked upon with suspicion by other Lutheran teachers. He wrote a book on *The Abuse of Christian Liberty* (1523), in which he deplores the type of "Evangelicals" which is so common in towns, people who think that to abuse the clergy, eat flesh on fast days, keep no Church festivals, and never go to confession is to be a good Lutheran. He says that there are many preachers and hearers who are far less godly than Papists are,

and are far more given to unchastity, drunkenness, blasphemy, avarice and other vices. Eberlin went about preaching on his own responsibility, and he says that he would much sooner preach in a town that was still Papist than in one in which the people had become reckless and self-willed through turning liberty into license. "But we shall have to answer for all this recklessness; of that there is no doubt."

Curicius Cordus (Heinrich Eberwein), a Lutheran lecturer in the University of Erfurt, writes to his friend Draconites in 1523, that the word of God is being freely preached and loudly applauded; he wishes that there was as much fruit as applause. "Our school is going to ruin, and among the students there is an amount of licentiousness which would not be exceeded in a camp of soldiers."

The Humanist Helius Coban Hesse writes to the same Draconites in 1523 that the University is being invaded by swarms of monks and nuns who have left their convents and settled in the town. *Nostra porro schola est deserta, nos contempti. Galli et Vestales sturmatim convolant, in perniciem videlicet studiorum. Quid fugitivos pluribus execrer? Nulla Phyllis nonnis est nostris mammosior.*

In Hesse the Landgrave Philip had founded a Protestant University at Marburg in May, 1527, and Rudolph Walther of Zürich gives an account of it to his teacher Bullinger in August, 1540. "The state of morality here is such as Bacchus and Venus

would have prescribed to their followers. To get drunk and spew and stagger about the streets brings shame to nobody; it is thought to be rather a fine thing and a good joke. But why should not the students behave in this way, seeing that most of the professors do just the same?"

The lamentations of Bucer over the disappointing results of the reformed teaching are frequent and profound. Most people despise and desert all the means of grace, and the evil one get his way. *Satanas eo adhuc quotidie trahit et dirigit, ut quam plurimi totum ecclesiae ministerium, verbum et sacramenta, consolationem absolutionis ac preces, imo totam communionem ecclesiae contemnant, ac deserant; atque hinc ab omni communione ecclesiae alienantur.* There is endless disputation and little unity, and genuine repentance is unknown, *etiam apud evangelicissimos.*

Johann Spangenberg writes in a similar strain of the disastrous change that has taken place among the working classes since the preaching of Protestantism; obedience, reverence, honesty and simplicity are gone, and the people are utterly spoilt children. No one goes to Church, no one contributes to the support of the clergy, but some are quite ready to plunder parsonages. They live a wild, brutish life, and when any one speaks to them of the Day of Judgment, they say that that is all a fable, invented by the preachers to frighten people

and keep them in order, just as one talks of bogies to children.

Johann Brenz, one of the Würtemberg Reformers, sarcastically remarks that it is quite unnecessary for the preachers to warn people not to put their trust in good works ; there are none for anybody to put any trust in. *Tanta est morum corruptio his temporibus, et tantum studium injustitiae, ut nullam videamur occasionem habere confidendi bonis operibus ; quid enim confidas iis, quibus cares ?*

Others tell us how people welcomed the new Gospel which had turned the clergy out of their livings, and monks out of their monasteries, and had handed over the revenues to those who accepted "evangelical" teaching ; but directly they were asked to give money for any charitable object, they said that this was a hard saying which they were unable to apprehend. In 1523 Luther wrote to the Count of Schwarzburg ; "If the monks do not preach the Gospel, take the parish away from them. The old Church owns nothing. The endowments were all given for the preaching of the Gospel, and if not earned they should be withdrawn and new servants appointed."

Joachim Camerarius, the intimate friend of Melanchthon, writes to Luther in 1536 lamenting the general depravity and the miserable condition of the schools. *Tanta pravitas in vitam, tanta in mores corruptio invasit, ea est omnium aetatum,*

generum, conditionum, ordinum, denique universi status rerum cum publice tum privatim miseria et confusio, ut ego quidem verear, actum esse de pietate et virtute. In another letter he says that "men have now got what they have been seeking—boundless license to think and do just what they please. There is no restraint of reason, or law, or custom, or authority, or public opinion, or respect for posterity."

This evidence might be increased to a very large extent, and with very much more detail; but it suffices to show the dismay with which many who greatly sympathized with the general principles of Luther's teaching regarded what seemed to be its immediate effects. They had hoped for so much, Luther had promised them so much, and what they saw all around them was so very different. In considering their evidence we must remember that disappointed enthusiasts are apt to be pessimistic. They exaggerate distressing facts, while they lose sight of what is encouraging. The Reformers were grievously disappointed at the first fruits of their labours. Such catastrophes as the Peasants' War and the monstrous behaviour of the wilder Anabaptists, to say nothing of the bitter controversies among the Protestants themselves, were disquieting enough, without adding to the account any deterioration, real or supposed, in the morality of private individuals.

The deterioration was probably real. In the history of every revolution, and especially of religious revolutions, there are always persons who are eager to take advantage of all the freedom which the new movement gives them, while they ignore all the new obligations. It was so when St. Paul preached liberty at Corinth and elsewhere, and it was so in Germany when Luther raised the same inspiring cry.[1] There were plenty of people who were eager to abandon compulsory celibacy, confession, and fasting, and to admit the nullity of good works, but would take no pains to acquire that holiness of life which is the sure evidence of Christian faith and Christian freedom. Erasmus, in one of his bitter letters against Hutten in 1523, speaks of ignorant and vile people who are adherents of Luther in such a fashion that they neither know nor observe what Luther teaches. They just have the Gospel on their lips, they neglect prayers and services, they eat what they please, and they revile the Pope: in that sense they are Lutherans. In other letters he writes in much the same strain.

There was much in Luther's teaching that easily led to libertine theories of conduct; and only strong characters can suddenly part with restraints, such as Luther declared to be harmful or unnecessary,

[1] Kirsopp Lake, *The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul*, p. 46; Harnack, *The Social Gospel*, pp. 54, 55; Hardwick, *The Reformation*, pp. 366, 367.

without some moral loss, at any rate for a time. It was like telling children that they might settle their own hours of play, and what they would have to eat and drink. Erasmus wrote to Melanchthon in 1535: "What can be more fatal than to tell illiterate people that the Pope is Antichrist, that confession is harmful, that 'works,' 'merits,' 'efforts' are heretical words, that there is no free will, and that it does not matter how men's actions are done?" "The Gospel once produced a new race of men. What this Gospel produces, I cannot say. People cry 'Gospel,' but they make it mean what they please."

The evidence of Luther himself in this point is very strong. He says that there are learned and faithful pastors everywhere, but that the results of their labours are not corresponding to them. "The people are cold, and many abuse their spiritual liberty to encourage sluggishness and carnal indifference." *Friget populus, et multi libertate spiritus abutuntur in teporem et securitatem carnis.* Moreover, those in authority take no pains to put a stop to vicious conduct. On the contrary they make a joke of it, condone it, and even do the like themselves. *Si dimidia civitas adulteriis, usura, furtis, dolis, fraudibus perdita sit, nemo judicat. Omnes paene rident, vel ipsi potius consentiunt, aut faciunt.* He says that the devil must be at work among them, "for under the bright light of the Gospel there are

more avaricious, deceitful, selfish, heartless, and unchaste persons than under the Papacy." He says of the peasantry that "now through the Gospel they have lost all restraint, so that they think that they may do just what they please. They fear neither hell nor purgatory, but say, I believe, and therefore I shall be saved." "They know nothing, learn nothing, and do nothing, but abuse their liberty. They don't say their prayers, don't confess, don't communicate—as if they had thrown off religion altogether." Other passages of a similarly desponding character have been collected from his writings.

But we must remember that much of the immorality which the Reformers deplore was not the result of their own teaching, even indirectly; it was inherited from the preceding age, and was the fruit of the old system rather than of the new. With regard to the vicious character of the age preceding the Reformation, the evidence of contemporary writers, all of them adherents of the Roman Church, is abundant and appalling.[1] The long schism, with

[1] The *De Ruina Ecclesiae* or *De Corrupto Ecclesiae Statu*, commonly, but perhaps wrongly, attributed to Nicolas de Clémanges, Rector of the University of Paris, may be mentioned as a sufficient source of information. Every rank of ecclesiastical officials and form of monastic life is condemned, from the Pope downwards. Among the parochial clergy, *vix inter mille unus* can be found who lives a godly life, and as to the nunneries, *non dico Dei sanctuaria, sed*

rival Popes excommunicating one another, and extorting money wherever they were recognized, the lives of such Popes as Alexander VI and Julius II, the conduct of the majority of the clergy everywhere—these and other gross evils led to the general conclusion that genuine religion had almost ceased to exist. In particular, it must be remembered that most men and women entered convents from low motives, and sometimes from the basest motives. At the present time people sometimes commit an offence in order to be sent to prison for the winter months. Convents in the middle ages were more comfortable than prisons are now, and there was much more freedom in them. Consequently, many men and women entered convents then, because with little or no work they could obtain better shelter and food than they could have by working hard outside. The discipline of the convents was commonly too lax to raise such inmates to a higher level. On the contrary, they brought the morality of the whole community down to their own level; and the reputation of the monasteries was so low that Luther tells us of a Bishop of Würzburg who used to say, when he found an incorrigible rogue:

Veneris execranda prostibula. The tract appeared about 1401, and in tone, though not in style, resembles the unquestioned works of Nicolas de Clémanges. J. C. Robertson (*Hist. of the Chris. Church*, VII, pp. 342, 470) gives some extracts. See Herzog und Plitt, art. "Clémanges."

"Be off to the cloister; thou art of no use to either God or man." That was another cause of the corruption of the monasteries; unsatisfactory members of society were banished to them. And then let us consider what would be the inevitable result of destroying convents, and letting thousands of such monks and such nuns loose upon a generation that was already debased and corrupt. Even granting that the Reformers do not give too black a picture of the moral condition of Protestant congregations in the sixteenth century, only a portion of the evil ought to be charged to the account of their own errors and failures. To a large extent the true way of stating the case is not that the teaching of the Reformers had made men worse, but, that it had failed to make them better. And it is here that the parallel between the Reformation and the first preaching of the Gospel breaks down. Christianity did not at once turn sinners into saints, as we see from the Epistles to the Corinthians, but it at once raised them to a much higher level of morality. The good fruits of the Reformation did not become generally manifest until the leaders had passed away.

Those good fruits were neither small nor few. First among them all we may place the freeing of men's minds and consciences from the debasing thraldom and terror in which the ecclesiastical tyranny of the Middle Ages had long held them.

Strict obedience to the hierarchy had been made the first requisite of salvation. Church law had been held to be supreme, and disobedience was punished with exclusion from the sacraments here, which was believed to involve exclusion from heaven hereafter. A man's eternal welfare was supposed to depend upon his satisfying the requirements of an official class, whose supernatural powers were quite independent of personal character, and might be acquired and exercised for the basest of motives by the basest of men. From this miserable dread the Reformation set men free, and brought each individual soul into immediate relation with God, without the necessary intervention of priest or Pope.[1] It would be difficult to over-estimate the value of this emancipation. It was very imperfectly worked out at the time, just as the right of every one to religious toleration was very imperfectly worked out. But in both cases the general principle was from time to time seen and declared; and it was left to later generations to develop and realize them. The difference between the two systems has been summed up thus. In Romanism, the minister is primarily a priest who offers sacrifice and grants pardon for sins, and these powers are possessed by no one else. In Protestantism, the minister is primarily a teacher, who, by expounding

[1] Mackinnon, *A History of Modern Liberty*, II, pp. 41, 42; *Cambridge Modern History*, II, p. 201.

God's word, enlightens men's consciences and strengthens men's wills. He is a prophet, but without the freedom of the Old Testament prophets. They were under no restraint but that of their own inspiration. The Christian minister is restrained by the Scriptures which he interprets, and which convey inspiration to him. In these ways the Reformation was an enormous stride towards the Apostolic ideal, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

1483. Birth of Luther, November 10.
1484. Birth of Zwingli, January 1.
1497. Birth of Melanchthon, February 16.
1500. Birth of Charles V, February 24.
The *Adagia* of Erasmus published.
1501. Luther matriculated at Erfurt.
1502. Zwingli matriculated at Basle.
1503. Death of Alexander VI, August 18.
Election of Julius II, October 31.
1505. Luther takes M.A. at Erfurt.
Enters Augustinian convent, July 17.
1506–16. Zwingli parish priest at Glarus.
1507. Luther ordained priest.
1508. Luther sent to the University of Wittenberg.
The *Chiliades Adagiorum* of Erasmus published.
League of Cambray, December 10.
1509. Birth of Calvin, July 10.
1510. Bull *Liquet omnibus*, January 11.
Julius II comes to terms with Venice.
1511. Erasmus teaches Greek at Cambridge.
The *Encomium Moriae* published.
Opening of the 2nd Council of Pisa, September 1.
Luther sent to Rome, October.
1512. Opening of the 5th Lateran Council.
Luther a Doctor of Theology, October 19.
1513. Death of Julius II, February 20.
Election of Leo X, April 11.
Luther lectures on the Psalms.

1515. Accession of Francis I.
Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum.
1516. Erasmus's Greek Testament published at Basle, February.
Luther lectures on Romans and Galatians.
1516–18. Zwingli people's priest at Einsiedeln.
1517. Leo X closes the 5th Lateran Council, March 16.
Publication of Luther's 95 Theses, October 31.
Complutensian Greek Testament completed.
1518. Luther's humble appeal to Leo X, May.
Luther before Cajetan at Augsburg, October.
1519. Death of the Emperor Maximilian, January 19.
Luther's submissive letter to Leo X, March 3.
Birth of Beza, June 24.
Election of Charles V, June 28.
Luther's disputation with Eck at Leipzig, July.
Luther's commentary on Galatians, September.
1519–31. Zwingli people's priest at Zürich.
1520. Death of Raffaelle, April 6.
Hutten's *Vadiscus* and *Inspicientes*, April.
Bull *Exsurge Domine*, against Luther, June 15.
Luther's Three Primary Treatises, August–October.
Luther's urgent appeal to Leo X, October 13.
Luther burns the Bull and the Decretals, December 12.
1521. Luther at the Diet of Worms, April 16–26.
Taken to the Wartburg, May 4.
Under the Ban of the Empire, May.
Communion in both kinds at Wittenberg, September.
Death of Leo X, December 1.
Melanchthon's *Loci Communes Rerum Theologicarum.*
1522. Election of Adrian VI, January 9.
The *Colloquies* of Erasmus published.
Luther returns to Wittenberg first Friday in Lent.
Issues part I of his *Kirchenpostille.*
Complutensian Greek Testament published.

1523. Letter of Adrian VI to Zwingli, January 23.
First public disputation at Zürich, January 29.
Death of Adrian VI, September 14.
Luther's translation of the New Testament published, September 21.
Election of Clement VII, November 19.

1524. Luther's collection of hymns.
Letter of Erasmus to Henry VIII, September 6.
Erasmus's *De Libero Arbitrio*, September.
Insurrection of the peasants in Germany.

1525. Francis I. taken prisoner at Pavia, February 24.
Twelve Articles of the peasants, March.
Luther tries to check the insurrection, April.
Death of the Elector, Frederick the Wise, May 5.
Luther denounces the rebellious peasants, May.
Münzer defeated at Frankenhausen, May 15; executed May 30.
Marriage of Luther with Katharina von Bora, June 13.
Luther's apology to Henry VIII, September 1.
Luther's *De Servo Arbitrio*, December.

1526–29. Organization of the Lutheran congregations.
Visitation of parishes in Saxony.

1526. First Diet of Spires opened June 26.

1527. Sack of Rome, May 6, Clement VII taken prisoner.
Birth of Philip II of Spain, May 21.

1528. Disputation at Berne between Zwinglians and Romanists, January.

1529. Second Diet of Spires. "Protest" of the minority, April 19.
Luther's Shorter and Longer Catechisms.
Colloquy at Marburg between Zwinglians and Lutherans, October.

1530. Diet of Augsburg, June; Charles V presided.
Confession of Augsburg, June 25.
Recess of Augsburg, November 19.

1531. League of Schmalkald, February 27.

1531. Ferdinand, brother of Charles V, crowned King of the Romans.
Death of Zwingli, October 11.
1531–4. Translation of the Old Testament into German.
1532. Peace of Nuremberg, July 23.
Farel arrives at Geneva, October 4.
1532–33. Conversion of Calvin to Protestantism.
1533. Address of Nicolas Cops, November 1, Flight of Calvin.
1534. First edition of the complete German Bible.
Anabaptist rising in Münster.
Peace of Kadan, June 29.
Society of Jesuits founded by Loyola, August 15.
Death of Clement VII, September 25.
Election of Paul III, October 13.
Placards at Paris against the Mass, October 17–18.
Final flight of Calvin from Paris.
1535. Luther begins to lecture on Genesis.
Calvin dedicates the *Christianae Religionis Institutio* to Francis I, August 23.
Fox, Heath, and Barnes reach Wittenberg, December.
1536. The *Christianae Religionis Institutio* published.
The Wittenberg Concord with Bucer and Capito, May 22–29.
Death of Erasmus at Basle, July 12.
Calvin arrives at Geneva, August 5.
1537. Luther at Schmalkald, February 7–28.
1538. Calvin and Farel expelled from Geneva, April 23.
1539. Cardinal Sadoleto's letter to Geneva, March 18.
Calvin's reply to Sadoleto, September 1.
1539. Death of Duke George of Saxony.
1539–41. Revision of the German Bible.
1540. Bigamy of Philip, Landgrave of Hesse.
Society of Jesuits approved by Paul III, September 27.
1541. Colloquy of Ratisbon, April 27–May 22; Charles V presided.

1541. Calvin returns to Geneva, September 13.
1542. Luther consecrates Nicolas von Amsdorf, Bishop of Naumburg, January.
Third Diet of Spires opened, February 9.
Inquisition established at Rome by Paul III, July 21.
1543. Attempted reforms of Hermann, Archbishop of Cologne.
1544. Third edition of Luther's German Bible.
Fourth Diet of Spires opened by Charles V, February 20.
Peace of Crespy, September 18.
1545. Luther concludes his lectures on Genesis, November 18.
End of his University career.
Opening of the Council of Trent, December.
1546. Council of Trent meets for business, January 7.
Luther's last sermon at Wittenberg, January 14.
Luther's last sermon, February 14.
Death of Luther, February 18.
Diet of Ratisbon.
Schmalkaldic War.
1547. Death of Henry VIII, January 28.
Death of Francis I, March 31.
Defeat of the Protestants at Mühlberg, April 24.
The Council moves from Trent to Bologna.
Diet of Augsburg.
1548. *Interim* of Augsburg, May 15.
1549. Council of Trent (Bologna) prorogued September 17.
Death of Paul III, November 10.
1550. Election of Julius III, February 7.
1551. Death of Bucer, February 28.
Council of Trent re-opened, May 1.
1552. Council of Trent suspended, April 28.
Death of Maurice of Saxony.
1553. Death of Edward VI, July 6.
Servetus burned at Geneva, October 27.
1554. Marriage of Philip of Spain and Mary Tudor, July.

1555. Death of Julius III, March 23.
Election of Paul IV, May 23.
Peace of Augsburg, September 25.
Abdication of Charles V, October 25.
1556. War between Paul IV and Philip II.
Death of Ignatius Loyola, July 31.
1558. Death of Charles V, September 21.
1559. Death of Paul IV, August 19.
1560. Election of Pius IV, January 6.
1561. University founded at Douay by Philip II.
1562. Council re-opens at Trent, January 18.
Death of Peter Martyr at Zürich, November 12.
1563. Close of the Council of Trent, December 4.
1564. Calvin's last sermon, February 6.
Death of Calvin, May 27.

APPENDIX I

EXTRACTS FROM THE *EPISTOLAE OBSCURORUM VIRORUM*, ILLUSTRATING THEIR TREATMENT OF ERASMUS.

Praeceptor singularissime, secundum quod scripsistis mihi nuper quod debeam vobis scribere novalia, sciatis quod ego nuperrime veni ex Heydelberga ad Strassburg volens emere quaedam materialia quibus utimur in nostris medicinalibus, ut scitis credo. . . . Cum itaque venissem illuc, venit ad me unus bonus amicus qui est mihi multum favorabilis, et quem vos bene cognoscitis, quia fuit diu etiam Coloniae sub virga vestra ; ille mihi dixit tunc de uno qui erat dictus Erasmus Roterdamus, mihi prius incognitus, qui esset homo valde doctus in omni scibili omnique doctrinarum genere ; et dixit quod esset jam in Strassburg. Ego nolui credere et adhuc non credo, quia videtur mihi impossibile quod unus homo parvus, ut ipse est, tam multa deberet scrire. Rogavi ergo eum qui mihi talia dixit valde plurimum, ut vellet me tamen ducere ad eum ut possem eum videre. . . . Cum igitur dixissem hoc amico meo, instituit collationem optimam et invitavit Theologos speculativos, Juristas splendidissimos ; et me quasi unum ex medicinarum practicatoribus, licet indignus. Nempe cum sedissent, tunc diu tacuerunt neque aliquis ex nobis voluit incipere prae pudore. . . . Quippe cum sic taceremus invicem, ipsemet incepit magno praeludio sermonisare ; ego vero non intellexi, vel non sum ex legittimo thoro natus, unicum verbum, quia habet tam parvam vocem ; puto

autem quod fuit ex theologia : et hoc fecit ut possit attrahere illum magistrum nostrum, virum maxime profundum in theologia, qui nobiscum sedebat in collatione. Quinimo cum finivisset illud praeludium, tunc incepit magister noster disputare subtilissime de ente et essentia, quod non opus est jam repetere, qui bene pertractastis illam materiam. Illo finito, ipse respondit paucis verbis ; tunc iterum omnes tacuerunt. Tunc ergo hospes noster qui est bonus humanista, incepit quaedam dicere ex poetria, ubi laudavit valde Caesarem Julium in suis scriptis et etiam factis. Profecto cum hoc audivissem, erat mihi bene adjuvatum, quia multa legi et audivi in poesi a vobis dum fui in Colonia, et dixi : " Quoniamquidem igitur incepistis loqui de poetria, non potui me longius occultare, et dico simpliciter, quod non credo Caesarem scripsisse illa commentaria, et volo dictum meum roborare hoc argumento, quod sic sonat : Quicunque habet negocium in armis et continuis laboribus, ille non potest latinum discere. Sed sic est quod Caesar semper fuit in bellis et maximis laboribus : ergo non potuit esse doctus vel latinum discere. Revera puto igitur non aliter quam quod Suetonius scripsit illa commentaria, quia nunquam vidi aliquem, qui magis haberet consimiliorem stilum Caesari quam Suetonius." Postquam ita dixissem et multa alia verba quae hic causa brevitatis omitto, quia ut scitis ex antiquo dicterio : " Gaudeut brevitate moderni," tunc risit Erasmus et nihil respondit, quia eum tam subtili argumentatione superavi (i. 42).

Ego credo etiam quod male jam procedat in Almania, quia ego sum absens ; omnes jam scribunt libros in theologia secundum suum libitum. Ipsi dicunt quod Erasmus Roterdamus composuit multos tractatus in theologia : ego non credo quod faciat omnia recte. Ipse etiam prius in uno parvo tractatu vexavit theologos, et jam scribit theologice est mihi mirum. Si ego venio in Almaniam et lego suos codiculos, et invenio unum parvissimum punctum ubi erravit vel ubi ego non intelligo, ipse debet videre quod ego volo sibi super cutem. Ipse scripsit etiam graece, quod non deberet facere : quia nos sumus latini et

non graeci. Si vult scribere quod nemo intelligat quare non scribit etiam Italicum et Bohemicum et Hungaricum et sic nemo intelligeret eum : faciat se conformem nobis Theologis in nomine centum diabolorum et scribat per *Utrum et Contra*, et *Arguitur*, et *Replica*, et per *Conclusiones*, sicut fecerunt omnes Theologi, sic etiam nos legeremus (i. 48).

Super hoc est hic unus Theologus, ut ipse se nominat, sed mihi videtur quod magis est poeta, dictus Erasmus Roterdamus, qui a multis ita honoratur sicut si esset miraculum Mundi. Et est ille qui scripsit liber Proverbiorum, quem semel ostendistis mihi Coloniae, et dixistis : " Quid nobis cum Proverbiis Erasmi, cum habemus proverbias Salamonis ? " ille Erasmus multum tenet de Reuchlin et semper laudat eum : et nuper fecit imprimere aliquas Epistolas quas misit ad Curia Romanam ad Papam et aliquos Cardinales. In istis laudavit Reuchlin et scandalizavit theologos. Ego videns dixi " Si videbunt hoc M. nostri, diabolus confundet eum " (ii. 38).

Venerabilis domine Magister, Sicut nuper scripsistis mihi quod quidam poeta in Almania dictus Erasmus Roterodamus componit multos libros, et praecipue composuit unam epistolam ad Papam, in qua commendavit Johannem Reuchlin : Sciatis quod vidi illam epistolam. Sed adhuc vidi unum alium librum magnum qui intitulatur " Novum Testamentum," et misit illum librum ad Papam : et credo quod libenter vellet quod Papa autenticaret illum librum. Sed spero quod non fiet. Quia Magister sacri Palatii qui est vir notabilis et magnae reputationis, dixit, quod vult probare quod Erasmus ille est haereticus. Quia in quibusdam passibus reprehendit doctorem sanctum et nihil tenet de Theologis. Et cum hoc scripsit unam materiam quae vocatur Moria Erasmi, quae habet multas propositiones scandalizativas et parum reverentiales, et aliquando continet apertas blasphemias. Quapropter Parrisienses volunt coburrere talem libmm. Ergo etiam non credo quod Papa autentitabit illum magnum librum (ii. 49).

APPENDIX II

DÖLLINGER ON LUTHER AND THE REFORMATION IN GERMANY

" The Reformation was a movement so deeply rooted in the needs of the age, and sprang so inevitably from the ecclesiastical conditions of the centuries immediately preceding, that it took possession of all the nations of the West in turn. So powerfully did it sway men's minds in Italy, the native home of the Papacy, that Paul IV declared the Inquisition, with its dungeons and blazing pyres, to be the only sure and firm support of the Papacy there. In Italy and Spain, however, it was found possible to crush the movement, though only at a frightful sacrifice of human life ; but in Germany it sank so deep into the heart of the nation that even such a tribunal as the Spanish Inquisition would have failed to achieve the task.

This force and strength of the Reformation was only in part due to the personality of the man who was its author and spokesman in Germany. It was Luther's overpowering greatness and wonderful many-sidedness of mind that made him the man of his age and his people. Nor was there ever a German who had such an intuitive knowledge of his countrymen, and was again so completely possessed, not to say absorbed, by the national sentiment, as the Augustinian monk of Wittenberg. The mind and spirit of the Germans was in his hand what the lyre is in the hand of a skilled musician. He had given them more than any man

in Christian days ever gave his people—language, popular manuals of instruction, Bibles, hymnology. All his opponents could offer in place of it, and all the reply they could make to him, was insipid, colourless, and feeble, by the side of his transporting eloquence. They stammered; he spoke. He alone has impressed the indelible stamp of his mind on the German language and the German intellect, and even those among us who hold him in religious detestation, as the great heresiarch and seducer of the nation, are constrained, in spite of themselves, to speak with his words and think with his thoughts.

And yet still more powerful than this Titan of the world of mind was the yearning of the German people for deliverance from the bonds of a corrupted Church system. Had no Luther arisen Germany would not have remained Catholic. We may gather that from the enthusiastic sympathy, especially in South Germany, for the doctrine of the Anabaptists. . . .

But if Luther and the other Reformers painted in the darkest colours the deep corruption in the Church, the wretched management of ecclesiastical affairs, the crimes of the clergy, and the unspeakable misery of the people, so utterly neglected, deceived, and plundered by their pastors, all this was fully admitted on the other side. And more than this too: the Popes themselves could not deny—for it was too notorious—that Rome itself was the seat and source of corruption, and the Popes its authors and disseminators. Adrian VI had it openly proclaimed at the Diet of Nuremberg in 1522, that everything in the Church had been perverted, and a disease had spread from the head to the members, from the Popes to the rest of the rulers of the Church. And what Adrian proclaimed in general, in accents of penitence, the Germans read in detail twelve years later in the famous memorial drawn up at the command of Paul III by nine Roman prelates, including Caraffa, afterwards Paul IV, where the theory, invented by sycophants, of the Pope's absolute dominion over the whole Church was characterized as the source of all this corruption. One member

of the Commission, Cardinal Contarini, who was afterwards papal legate in Germany, expressly maintained the impiety of this doctrine, which made the Pope absolute lord and master of the whole Church, and defended Luther's work on the Babylonish Captivity, where the doctrine of Christian liberty is opposed to this tyrannical doctrine" (The Reunion of the Churches, 1872, pp. 61–65).

APPENDIX III

SPECIMENS OF LUTHER'S TEACHING

Among Luther's 95 Theses are the following :—

5. The Pope has neither the will nor the power to remit any penalties, except those which he has imposed by his own authority, or by that of the canons.

20. Therefore the Pope, when he speaks of the plenary remission of all penalties, does not mean actually all, but only those imposed by himself.

21. Thus those preachers are in error who say that by the indulgences of the Pope a man is loosed from all punishment.

24. Hence the greater part of the people must needs be deceived by this indiscriminate promise of release from penalties.

42. Christians should be taught that it is not the mind of the Pope that the buying of pardons is in any way to be compared with works of mercy.

44. By a work of charity, charity increases and the man is made better ; while by means of pardons he does not become better, but only freer from punishment.

52. Vain is the hope of salvation through letters of pardon, even if the Pope himself were to pledge his own soul for them.

62. The true treasure of the Church is the Holy Gospel of the glory and grace of God.

66. The treasures of indulgences are nets, wherewith they now fish for the riches of men.

76. Papal pardons cannot take away even the least of venial sins as regards its guilt.

86. Why does not the Pope build the Basilica of St. Peter with his own money, rather than with that of poor believers ?

90. To repress scruples and arguments by force, and not solve them by giving reasons, is to expose the Church to ridicule and to make Christian men unhappy.

92. Away with all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, " Peace, peace," and there is no peace.

93. Blessed be all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, " The cross, the cross," and there is no cross.

In his address *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*,[1] Luther says that the Romanists have drawn three walls round themselves to prevent reform. They say (1) That the temporal power has no jurisdiction over the spiritual ; (2) that no one may interpret Scripture but the Pope ; and (3) that no one may summon a Council but the Pope.

As to the first wall, Luther contends : " The temporal power must exercise its office without considering whom it may strike, whether Pope, bishop, or priest ; whoever is guilty, let him suffer. St. Paul says to all Christians, Let every soul (I presume including Popes) be subject to the higher powers ; for they bear not the sword in vain. . . . It must have been the arch-devil himself who said, as we read in the ecclesiastical law, If the Pope were so disastrously wicked as to be dragging souls in crowds to the devil, yet he could not be deposed."

As to the second wall, that the Pope is the sole interpreter of Scripture, Luther says : " If God spoke by an ass against a prophet, why should He not speak by a pious man against the Pope ? . . . St. Paul says, If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. What would be the use of this, if we were to believe him alone that has the highest seat ? "

As to the third wall, that the Pope alone has power to summon a Council, he remarks that the Council of Nicaea was not summoned by a Pope ; " Moreover, if I consider the Councils that the Pope has called, I do not find that they produced notable results."

" It is a distressing thing to see that in him that calls

[1] The dedication, to Nicolas von Amsdorf, is dated, "eve of S. John the Baptist, 1520."

himself most holy and most spiritual there is more worldliness than in the world itself. . . . Sees are consumed, the revenues of all the Churches are drawn to Rome, and the people are ruined, because there is no more any worship of God or preaching. Why? Because the Cardinals must have all the wealth. No Turk could have thus desolated Italy and overthrown the worship of God. Now that Italy is sucked dry, they come to Germany, and begin very quietly; but if we look on quietly, Germany will soon be brought to the same state as Italy. . . . I do not here complain that God's commandments are despised at Rome; the state of Christendom is too bad for us to complain of such matters. I complain that they do not observe their own Canon Law, though this in itself is tyranny rather than law. . . . It would be no wonder if God were to rain fire and brimstone from heaven and cast Rome down into the pit, as He did Sodom and Gomorrah. . . . I have said, and will say, nothing of the infernal dregs of private vices. I speak only, of well-known public matters, and yet my words do not suffice."

"Pilgrimages to Rome should be abolished; not because pilgrimages are bad in themselves, but because at Rome a pilgrim sees no good examples, but only offence. They themselves have a proverb, 'The nearer to Rome, the farther from Christ,' and so men bring home contempt of God and of God's commandments. It is said, 'The first time a man goes to Rome, he goes to seek a rogue; the second time he finds him; the third, he brings him home with him.' Now they can do their three journeys in one. If any one wishes to make a vow for a pilgrimage, let them tell him to spend the money and the labour a pilgrimage would cost him on his family and poor neighbours. No one is content to walk on the broad high-road of God's commandments; every one makes for himself new roads and new vows, as if he had kept all God's commandments. A man may be content with what he vowed in baptism."

"If anything is harmful to body and soul, not only has every community authority to prevent or abolish such

wrong without the consent of Pope or bishop, but it is their duty, as they value their soul's salvation, to prevent it, even though Pope and bishop are unwilling to see it stopped."

" The Pope leads you away from God's gifts, which you have for nothing, to his own gifts, which you must buy. If you try to ride to heaven on the Pope's wax and parchment, your carriage will soon break down, and you will fall into hell."

" We must put a stop to the excuses of those who say that they must have more than one office or benefice to enable them to live in their proper station. It is possible to estimate one's proper station in such a way that a whole kingdom would not suffice to maintain it."

" I hold the proverb to be true, ' Most men become monks and priests in desperation.' That is why things are as we see them."

In *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, Luther gives his views respecting divorce. " If Christ permits divorce for the cause of fornication, and does not compel any man to remain single, and if Paul bids us rather to marry than to burn, this seems plainly to allow a man's marrying another in the place of her whom he has put away. I wish that provision might be made for the numberless perils of those who at the present day are compelled to remain single without any fault of their own, *i.e.*, whose partners have fled, not to return for ten years, or never. I am distressed by these cases, which are of daily occurrence. . . . In 1 Cor. vii. 15, the Apostle permits the unbelieving one who departs to be let go, and leaves it free to the believer to take another. Why should not the same rule hold good, if a believer—*i.e.*, a nominal one, but in reality just as much an unbeliever—deserts husband or wife, especially if with the intention of never returning ? I cannot discover any distinction between the two cases. Still, I give no definite opinion, though I greatly wish that a definite rule were laid down ; for there is nothing which more harasses me and many others."

At the opening of *The Freedom of the Christian Man*

Luther lays down two propositions: "A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none ; A Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to every one."

He sent this tract on Christian Liberty to Leo X, with a letter in which he distinguishes between the Pope and the Curia, and between the public enormities and private vices of officials. "I have said nothing of you but what was honourable and good. I have called you Daniel in Babylon. I am not so foolish as to attack one whom everybody praises. I have never thought any evil concerning your person. Your See, however, which is called the Court of Rome, and which neither you nor any man can deny to be more corrupt than any Babylon or Sodom, and quite, as I believe, of a hopeless impiety, I have verily abominated, and I have felt indignant that the people of Christ should be cheated under your name by the pretext of the Church of Rome. For many years nothing has overflowed from Rome into the world (and of this you yourself are not ignorant) than the laying waste of goods, of bodies, and of souls, and the worst examples of all worst things. For all these things are clearer than the light."

"What opposition can you make single-handed to these monstrous evils ? Add to yourself three or four of the best and most learned of your Cardinals. What are these among so many ? You would all die of poison before you had time to decide about a remedy. It is all over with the Court of Rome ; the wrath of God has come upon her to the uttermost. She hates Councils ; she fears to be reformed ; she has no power to abate the madness of her impiety. She is not worthy of you and those like you, but of Satan himself, who in truth is more the ruler in that Babylon than you are. She incomparably surpasses the impiety of the Turks, so that one who was formerly the gate of heaven is now a sort of open mouth of hell, and such a mouth as cannot be blocked up ; one course alone being left to us wretched men—to call back some few from that Roman gulf."

"Leo, my Father, beware of those sirens who make you

out to be partly a god, to require and command what you will; who pretend that you are lord of the world; who babble of your having power over heaven, hell, and purgatory. These men are your enemies, and they seek after your soul to destroy it."

In one of the sermons which he preached after his return from his "Patmos" to Wittenberg, he speaks thus of his work: "I will preach about it, speak about it, write about it; but I will compel no one and drive no one. Belief is to be accepted freely and spontaneously. I have opposed indulgences and the Papists, but not by force. I have only preached and written the word of the Lord; and the word has done and accomplished everything. Had I wished to proceed turbulently, I could have caused great bloodshed in Germany."

In a similar spirit he had written to Spalatin from the Wartburg respecting the excesses of the Zwickau prophets: "Pray let them alone; do not imprison them. Let not our prince imbrue his hands with their blood."

Early in 1523 Luther taught the duty of toleration in a pamphlet with the Title *Dass ein Christiche Versammlung Recht habe alle Lere zu urteilen und Lehrer zu berufen.* In it he contends that every Christian has the right to believe as his experience of God's forgiving love suggests; and about the same time he printed a sermon which Duke John had asked him to preach at Weimar, in which he warned rulers against prosecuting for heresy. "Civil authority," he said, "is justified, if it is exercised for the good of others. But heresy is a matter of the spirit, and cannot be controlled with the sword; here the civil arm must hold aloof. Princes are, it is true, mostly fools, but one must obey them, save where they try to compel us to deny God." Luther expanded the sermon before printing it, and we may suppose that the last sentence was not preached in the Duke's presence. The title is *Von weltlicher Oberkeit, wie weit man ihr Gehorsam schuldig sei.*[1]

When the Anabaptist fanatic Münzer was preaching that,

[1] Carruth, p. xxxviii.

as in the Old Testament, the godless were to be put to death, and that the princes who opposed the Anabaptists ought to be assassinated, Luther wrote in July, 1524, to Duke John and to the Elector to warn them, but advised them to let these enthusiasts alone, so long as they merely talked, for it was not possible to avoid divisions among Christians.

But when it was no longer a question between Lutherans and Romanists, but between Lutherans and Zwinglians, Luther taught differently. It was when he was in a condition of physical, and perhaps intellectual weakness that he wrote *Vom Abendmahl Christi, Bekenntnis Martin Luther,* in order to prevent the Zwinglians from saying after his death that he had agreed with them. It was published in March, 1528. He was now of opinion that princes were justified in allowing only one religion to be preached in their territory. Preachers " should be forbidden to do anything apart from or against the Gospel, and should be prevented from doing it by force." Heretics were to be banished. The denial of the resurrection of the dead, or of heaven and hell, ought to be suppressed by the civil power. According to this view the civil power is to decide what is " apart from or against the Gospel," which means that it is to be an authoritative interpreter of Scripture and is to expel those who teach in opposition to its interpretations. At the same time he says that he " regards Zwingli as no Christian, for he teaches no article of the Christian faith rightly." Evidently, Zwinglians are to be exiled by Lutheran princes. But, unlike other Reformers, Luther refused to sanction the execution of heretics. In his better moments he agreed with the dictum of Minkwitt, at the Second Diet of Spires (April, 1529), when the attempt was made to crush the Lutherans by a majority of votes: " *In Sachen des Gewissens gibt es keine Majorität*; in matters of conscience majorities are of no account." He was the Saxon delegate, and is a worthy exponent of the best teaching of Luther. "In matters relating to the salvation of souls every one of us must stand before and give account of himself to God."

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